

We'll Find the Place

By Earl Donald Attridge (© 1997)

Acknowledgements

My resolve to write this book became fixed when I decided to end my Temple marriage, resign my membership in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and requested my name be removed from the membership rolls of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

This book is not an expose of the Church but a call to healing for myself, a gentle voice to the Church leadership, and to the membership. It is written to all people who seem to struggle in their understanding of the homosexual experience. To reveal discomfort and pain may in some small way raise the consciousness of those who preside over others. Once the understanding has been accomplished I hope to hear the still small voice of God teaching all of us to better love one another.

I appreciate the missionaries who first taught me the discussions or (doctrines) to the Mormon Church. They saw in me, what they called a golden person to convert. I feel gratitude for the faith of these missionaries for seeing in me a love for the truth and my desire to progress spiritually.

I acknowledge my children's love and acceptance of their father, knowing they too must struggle as all of us do with life's puzzling circumstances. And yet they too must build precept upon precept of faith as I have to gain and regain a testimony of the Restored Gospel (Mormon Church). I love my children. I acknowledge my children as the most precious part of my life.

Thank you to my son who provided his computer and encouragement just when I needed to start this work. I acknowledge my other son who by his love and understanding withstood an onslaught of negativity concerning my lifestyle and my life. I am praying that this book will bring neither shame nor blame but enable them to know that they were loved by both of their parents through a difficult stormy period in all of our lives.

My thanks to June Reading an author in the history of the families that settled San Diego, California. She encouraged me by suggesting new emphasis within the book, adding hours of feedback and support which influenced the completion of the work.

Gerard W. Arthur-Wong, Psy.D. did in depth editing which included punctuation, syntax, and

composition. Dr. Wong can also be credited with balancing friendship and professional resources enabling me to begin to heal many wounds from past occurrences in my life. Thank you for your participation in the refinement of this writing.

My deep appreciation to Dana Bruce for reviewing large sections of the manuscript, giving me numerous suggestions concerning the appropriate concepts, word usages and context.

I acknowledge my conscience which awakened me sometimes daily extremely early to help me contemplate every side of this dilemma imaginable.

My lack of embellishment of the physical description of many of the people in this book is out of respect for their privacy. Names have been altered to protect them from any consequences of their forced hypocrisy. Public names used are a matter of Church, State and Local records implying no blame to them for their behavior.

It may appear there is an extreme detailing of my biographical information. This is due only to the anticipated disbelief many members of the Church and the Church leadership may have in believing my life and circumstances occurred. When I remained an anonymous writer previous to this book, many members of the Church tried to discredit my experiences and writings. I want them to understand I am a real person whose experiences are revealed in this work.

Purpose

My purpose in this book is to relate my experiences as a Gay male in the Mormon Church. It is to let others in and out of the controversy know a sense of history on how the expression of homosexuality was dealt with previously as well as currently. The Church appears to be involved with discussion groups concerning the needs of Lesbian and Gay members today ever so carefully. The events in this book did take place and I'll let them stand as the truth as far as I know it, so help me God.

When I was involved in a lawsuit against the State of Utah I took a stand declaring my sexual orientation which amounted to career suicide. It has been my desire to state my position, exercising my first amendment right to speak. One of the purposes of this work is to stand up for myself to speak the truth for my life.

My use of the word homosexual rather than Gay and Lesbian often appears in this work due to the time frame of the 60's in which that term applied and the inclusive journal entries of that time period state. Of course I cannot relate what Lesbian women have experienced but throughout my writing I include their name realizing their processes of separation from the Church would hold as much pain for them as it did for me.

It is my desire to turn the hearts of the fathers (and mothers) toward their children and through forgiveness turn the children's hearts back toward their fathers. There is room for Gays and Lesbians in the Mormon Church and to that end I seek that We'll Find The Place.

One of the purposes of this writing has to do with documenting the experience of one Mormon gay man (myself) for benefit of the Mormon Church, other religions, Christian or non-Christian. I would like to reserve one copy of the book to be placed in the Gay and Lesbian History Archives to inform people of the struggles of Mormon Gays.

I must now draw deep from the well of human kindness and the true teachings of Jesus Christ to forgive all that has passed. I want to do so that I can continue to enjoy any and all possibilities of my future and my future after life.

Introduction

The former President and Prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Spencer W. Kimball instructed me as a member of the Mormon Church to keep a journal, a diary. The record would be an account of my life to my posterity and loved ones.

My journal entries which will follow are a compilation of my most personal thoughts. At times I had only God with whom to share them. I share them now with the hope that they may benefit members of the Church and any other religion or individual. I desire that they will give people like me, Mormon and Gay, hope that there is a place for us.

My children for the most part have come to an understanding and acceptance that their father is gay. My children also know me as a sensitive person, an artist, a singer, and kind of a cross between Bob Cratchet and Ebenezer Scrooge. He's the buddy that takes them to Disneyland. Dad is a good cook. He talks a lot and has a dry sense of humor. Mostly they love me. No matter what. Somehow I would think that the Church would be as decent to me as my children.

I know that there are God's rules. I believe in the Ten Commandments. I realize that some people would think that I am in violation of these commandments. I am working with the situation and circumstances of my environment, inheritance, and emotional and spiritual matrix to do all I know possible to adhere to God's laws. Just because a person is gay does not exclude them from good behavior and adherence to the commandments of God. However, sometimes religious people have been the primary hindrance in my struggle for obedience.

People for thousands of years have been keeping records of that which is important to the rest of humanity. My records report my humanness, mistakes, weaknesses, triumphs, and accomplishments. I hope these documented records will enable gay and lesbian people to find a place within the framework of their religious beliefs.

I am writing this book for gay men and lesbian women in or out of the Church who may have given up hope in the organized churches of today. I do so to find a way we as a people might live the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ or whatever our religious beliefs without persecution and judgment hanging over us.

I am submitting these observations and records to the General Authorities (Prophet, Apostles) of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its members whose lives have been influenced by their instruction. I bring these records into light so that they may give hope to people who share my love for the gospel and the truth.

I offer hope to those who have experienced what we may believe is the lack of love, times of despair, betrayal or persecution at the hands of those who would guide us. I realize that people in other Christian and non-Christian organizations have also experienced similar occurrences.

I do not mock God. I beg those who would condemn me to read these journal entries so that those, especially in the Church, may broaden their knowledge and deepen their understanding. I have been so close to you.

Like many Mormon gays and lesbians I chose excommunication from the Church as a way to protect myself from all the persecution and great duress I believed I was going through in my life. I excommunicated myself from the church by writing a letter of rage expressing anything I could think of at the time which I had at variance with the Church. I have no variance with the Church's teachings now; however I cannot find the place for us.

This does not mean that I would go back into a sea of disillusionment, mistrust, or hypocrisy as a member of the Church. I have returned to the Lord. When I return to the Church, it will be in honesty, self-respect, and without hypocrisy.

I think of the following words as a commandment to gays and lesbians and people of good will everywhere, "Ask and ye shall receive, knock and it shall be opened unto you." (Luke 11:9)

We are not trying to break down the door but it must open completely in order for us to serve. I don't know what will open unto us, but I do believe it will be something more positive than that which has been opened to me. I know the time is now for we are ripe, all ready to harvest. I pray that we as Gay and Lesbian Mormons will never give up hope, and that a door will finally open where there seemed no open door.

Some Hope

March 10, 1991 - " Mission Bay Ward (ward- a congregation) Sacrament Meeting Bulletin: Announcements: Discussion Group for Gays, Lesbians and their Families and Friends. The Mission Bay Ward invites everyone to attend a discussion group focused on the issues that gays, lesbians and their families and friends encounter with the Church. Love, tolerance, confidentiality and acceptance are the passwords to this meeting. Please bring drinks or snacks to share. Wednesday March 13th at 7:00 p.m. at the Pacific Beach Bldg. The room number will be posted in the front west foyer. For more information please contact Mark at phone #."

This Church bulletin was given to me by my neighbor Rhonda while I lived in San Diego, California. She was a member of the Mission Bay Singles Ward (young adult congregations made specifically for single members of the Mormon Church.) We had some discussions concerning me being gay and leaving the Church. When I saw the Church bulletin I was greatly encouraged that I might find a place in the framework of the belief system which I had belonged.

My interest in the discussion group was rekindled when Larry walked into the Better World Bookstore in Mission Hills, San Diego which I was managing. The owner of the store mentioned to me that Larry was a gay Mormon. I spoke to him about the group that was meeting for gays and lesbians at the Mission Bay Ward. I found that Larry had attended the group giving me even more courage to attend. The owner of the bookstore and her husband allowed me to use their Volkswagen Van to attend the meeting.

There was a large sign in the foyer of the Mission Bay Ward Chapel (building where ward members meet). It said " GAYS AND LESBIANS DISCUSSION GROUP MEETING." The sign pointed to the Relief Society Room (women's Church organization). I was deeply moved to be entering a Mormon Chapel with some bit of welcome once again after so many years of absence. I was encouraged at first to be directed to the Relief Society room one of the most nurturing rooms in the chapel.

I walked in on a group of people that included the Bishop of the Ward, the first counselor in the Bishopric (officers over a ward) Mark the leader, and about a dozen Gay men, Lesbian women and other members of the Mission Bay Ward. I was in awe that these leaders would be there showing interest in people once considered so undesirable. Other meetings were to be attended by representatives of the stake president and the stake president himself. (Stake-a region over several wards)

The group was embroiled in a discussion about removing the announcement for the group from the ward bulletin. Some of the members of the ward had found the announcement in the church bulletin objectionable relaying that information to the meeting through Mark and the Bishopric. (Bishopric- consists of a Bishop or ward leader and two counselors).

I related to them that I had found out about the group meeting through the bulletin. I told them I would not have been at the meeting if it were not for the announcement.

Mark was in charge of the meeting. He was a tall, brown haired, honest Abe kind of a man with glasses and a listening ear. I came to understand that he perhaps had a family member who was either gay or had other difficulties with the Church. Consequently, Mark was moved to help others separated from the Church.

I noticed John from Salt Lake City. He was active in the Affirmation Group (Gay Mormons). That night he was so discouraged with the Church he was thinking of atheism. There was a gay male couple, Joseph and Richard who believed in the Church but felt that homosexuality was

misrepresented as in the accounts of Sodom and Gomorrah. The question was discussed "Why would Lot offer his daughters to a group of homosexuals?"

I agreed with the suggestion that we do service projects for the ward so members could see us. I reminded the group that we were spiritual people and we could do much good as members of the Church if given the opportunity. Since I did not believe I would be changed to heterosexual I still wanted us to be the best of service to others as possible in this life.

I attended group meetings from April through July 9th 1991. On the latter date, I was to tell of my experiences in the Church. However, no one showed up except Mark, the Bishopric priesthood leader. I related my experiences to Mark. He was very moved. He commented how sorry he was that I had experienced so much pain.

I was surprised that July evening when Mark related to me that he had gone to Dr. Robert Card, a Salt Lake psychologist and Stake leader. Mark told me that he too had taken a form of aversion shock therapy. Mark also related that he had bad experiences with this therapy.

What occurred to me in Dr. Card's offices in the 70's were supposed to have changed my homosexual desire to heterosexual. These sessions were paid for by the State of Utah Rehabilitation Services.

Pornographic heterosexual and homosexual movies were shown to me. An electric shock device was attached to my arm and a measuring device was attached to my penis. A strong shock was applied to my arm whenever I was aroused by the homosexual films. I called the therapist, Dr. Frankenstein, because he was the one who was wildly pushing the shock button.

Dr. Card said he got carried away treating me because I was a member of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, an official missionary arm of the Church. This was small consolation to me as my arm became serrated like a piece of hamburger. Dr. Card would later claim that the gay community complained too much about this form of treatment.

I was amazed to see that these trained professionals, licensed therapists and counselors of the State of Utah would think that one's sexual orientation could by means of electric stimulation be shocked out of them. I felt degraded being shuffled along with convicted sex offenders into such a treatment mode.

Just the opposite seemed apparent in 1991 as the Mission Bay study group stood before me. I felt like this group had integrity for the group wanted my salvation without coercion or forced behaviors. I would now be able to go at reasonable pace with reasonable self-initiated goals.

Members of the group had written guidelines to the group as rules on how they wanted to be treated in the group and the Church. These guidelines were written so as to preserve a safe environment for Gays and Lesbians members of the Church to meet. I find these guidelines an

important start to any further groups set up by or for the Church and its Gay and Lesbian membership.

Guidelines to the Discussion Group which meeting in the Mission Bay Ward. 1. Attitude - We will show each other love, compassion, honesty, respect, and tolerance. 2. Respect for Opinions. We will give everyone who so desires, a right to express his or her own opinion without interruption or argument. 3. Confidentiality - We will not reveal outside of the discussion group (a) the identities of anyone who attends the group; or (b) the details of any of the matters discussed in the group. 4. Purpose - We will attend the discussion group for the sole purpose of helping gays, lesbians, family members, friends, and ourselves to develop spiritually by uniting together in a religious environment to work through issues relating to spirituality and sexuality.

We hope that the spirituality of everyone in the group will grow as we enhance our love, understanding, sensitivity, and respect for ourselves and each other through open, honest, and safe communication. We acknowledge that the purpose of the discussion group is not to engage in psychological or other therapy relative to sexual issues, preferences or actions. We encourage ecclesiastical and/or other competent counseling. Furthermore, the purpose of the group is not to criticize or modify the formal teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints respecting the issue of homosexuality.

These guidelines, I believe were drawn up by the priesthood leaders of the group both gay and straight with an eye single to the salvation of souls. I believe such guidelines would be good for continuing the socialization of Gays and Lesbians back into the Church.

Providing a safe environment is a very historical tenant of the Church. "We'll find a place which God for us prepared, Far away in the West," expounds the beloved Mormon hymn, Come Come Ye Saints." Where none shall come to hurt or make afraid, "it continues. All these occurrences we as Gays and Lesbians desired from the Church.

Unfortunately this open door, this apparent hope came to an end. When Mark left the area a new Bishop came in completely disbanding the group meeting. The door of opportunity was again unfortunately closed.

Excommunication

There was such hope as I started my first semester at B.Y.U. in 1968. There was such hope as I flew on the plane to Salt Lake City through the snow capped mountain passes into the Salt Lake basin to the mission home (training center) to prepare for a mission. There was such hope in 1972 when I was dressed in white with my future wife within the walls of the Salt Lake Temple preparing for our eternal marriage.

There was such hope when our children were first born. There was such hope during each event packed day as my wife and I served others in wards of the Church, in the Tabernacle Choir, and in the Salt Lake Temple.

Now there is a bitterness which I cannot seem to forget. It is cold as a crust of snow waiting for the warmth of the voices of the Lord's appointed to say "Come unto to Jesus." Will you now listen to the echoes of my personal journals? I did all that I could to fight this bitterness. I fought a fight I seemingly could not win.

My bitterness affected every part of my life. It interfered with my employment and progression in life. I found myself withdrawing from many simple joys of life like friends, good relationships with relatives, and social interactions.

When ones Church and major belief system disapproves of the very essence of a person then all seems lost. When a person experiences constant failure at being persuaded to act contrary to their abilities and true desires, there is a time to say that is enough. I can bear no more.

My limit arrived In June 8, 1978. I had done everything I knew humanly possible to follow the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Church. I saw everything falling apart around me. I found myself recalling everything I could think of to separate myself from what I believed was persecuting me.

I believe mistakes were made. They were not all mine. What I found myself doing was forgetting any good that I had experienced in the Church. Like a fugitive being cornered, I lashed out with such rage so as to sever myself from what I believed was a torture to me.

And yet in the midst of the anger I was pleading for understanding. My words were not tempered with love but with grief. It was deepest grief. It was my deepest grief.

I wrote my excommunication letter at the time I separated from my wife and children. I had lost several of my jobs due to being gay. I had also just separated from the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. My losses at the time seemed insurmountable.

I have clarified some statements of my letter with several points of enhancement as it was written under great duress. I was not thinking of how to make it understandable to the world in general but more to the leaders of the Church who presided over me including President and Prophet Spencer W. Kimball. The text of my letter requesting my excommunication no matter how blunt, emotional, and piercing came from my pain.

There were comments I made concerning questions I had about the temple which I do not include. I believe I stated them to assure my excommunication. I will discuss them with those leaders who I hope will find the place for me in the Church at some later time.

My Excommunication Letter

June 8, 1979

Dear Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:

IN A VERY TORN STATE DO I REQUEST MY NAME BE TAKEN FROM THE ROLLS OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED CHURCH. I HAVE FOUND REASONS TO CAUSE ME TO BE ASHAMED TO BE CONNECTED WITH THE ABOVE CHURCH.

I WAS ALWAYS UPSET WITH THE BELIEF THAT BLACKS COULD NOT HOLD THE PRIESTHOOD. THE MISSIONARIES WHO BAPTIZED ME DECEIVED ME TO THINK THAT THERE WAS NOTHING WITHHELD FROM BLACK MEMBERS. I FIND THAT THE RECENT CHANGE IS STILL TOO LATE, TOO PRETENTIOUS AND A MOCKERY TO THE HUMAN RACE.

I BELIEVE THE CHURCH IS SO RICH AND POWERFUL SO AS TO FORGET THE NEEDS OF A STARVING WORLD, AND ITS OWN LONELY MEMBERS. THE MONUMENTAL MILLION DOLLAR TEMPLES, WARD HOUSES AND PLEASURES ENJOYED BY THE MAJORITY, BY THE HIERARCHY, BY THE MEMBERS WHILE HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS IN THE WORLD STARVE IS TRULY UNCHRISTIAN.

I AM APPALLED AT HOW I WAS USED TO INFORM ON HOMOSEXUAL STUDENTS AT BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY. THIS SUBSEQUENTLY LEADING TO THE SUICIDE OF BRAD LAURITZEN ONE OF THE STUDENTS ON THE LIST WHO DESERVED TO LIVE. HOW CAN YOU EXPECT ME TO LIVE WITH MYSELF INVOLVED IN THIS KIND OF TREACHERY. YOU HAVE MADE ME A PARTY TO GUILT OF HIS DEATH.

I HAVE DONE EVERYTHING HUMANLY POSSIBLE TO CONFORM TO THE PROGRAM TO THE PLAN; MARRIAGE, CHILDREN, TEMPLE WORK, A MEMBER OF THE TABERNACLE CHOIR, SHOCK AVERSION THERAPY, AND HUNDREDS OF HOURS ON MY KNEES PLEADING FOR UNDERSTANDING AND A VIABLE PLAN OF ACTION.

YOUR PROGRAM HAS MADE OUT OF ME A LIAR, AN ADULTERER, AND DEEP SHAME FOR HURTING OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES. I CAN NOT BE FORCED TO YOUR HEAVEN. FORCE IS SATAN'S PLAN. YET THE CHURCH NOW ADOPTS FORCE TO CHANGE PEOPLE TO THEIR WAY. I DO NOT WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH SUCH PLANS. THEY HAVE ALL FAILED NOT ONLY WITH ME BUT EVERYONE I HAVE SPOKEN TO THAT HAVE TRIED THIS PLAN.

I RESENT THE CHURCH EXPERIMENTING WITH MY WIFE AND MY OWN LIFE. TO LIE TO OUR SPOUSES CONCERNING OUR HOMOSEXUALITY LEAVING US WITHOUT DIRECTION OR COMFORT WHEN ALL COMES TO NOT. MARRY A HOMOSEXUAL TO A HETEROSEXUAL AND YOU GET DIVORCE AND ALL THE ATTENDANT MISERIES FOR THE OFFSPRING AND THE COUPLE.

ESPECIALLY DO I WEEP FOR MY BEAUTIFUL CHILDREN WHO DESERVED MORE THAN AN EXPERIMENT. THEY DESERVED TWO PARENTS THAT HAD ENOUGH TIME TO LOVE THEM INSTEAD OF DEALING WITH ALL THE PRETENSES THE CHURCH PLAN DEMANDED. THEY NEVER DESERVED AN EXPERIMENT THAT HAS NEVER WORKED NOT ONCE.

I AM DISAPPOINTED THAT PEOPLE OF UTAH LIVE IN SUCH A STIFLED WAY AS TO WALLOW IN MEDIOCRITY, CONDEMNING ANYTHING NEW IN THE ARTS, DIFFERENT, AND CREATIVE. IT MUST MAKE THEM FEEL SECURE BUT THIS IS NOT A PART OF THE PLAN OF ETERNAL PROGRESSION TO HAVE A CLOSED MIND TO IGNORE ALL THE CREATIVITY OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

THERE ARE MANY GENERAL AUTHORITIES WHO HAVE CHILDREN AND FAMILY MEMBERS WHO ARE HOMOSEXUAL. WHEN WILL THE HEARTS BE TOUCHED TO STOP THE PERSECUTION, RIDICULE AND ABUSE WHICH ONLY DRIVES THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO THE CORNER INSTEAD OF BEING MORE LIKE A LATTER-DAY SAINT. I'VE SEEN GREAT ACTS OF LOVE ACCOMPLISHED BY BOTH HETEROSEXUAL AND HOMOSEXUAL PEOPLE.

I WONDER WHY I WAS PERMITTED TO SEE INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES WHEN I WORKED IN THE SALT LAKE TEMPLE. THE LORD TOLERATED MY PRESENCE IN HIS HOLY PLACES. I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HOMOSEXUAL. WHAT AM I TO THINK OTHER THAN I AM AS SPIRITUAL A PERSON AS ANY OTHER. I AM NOT PERFECT. I CAN NOT BE SOMEONE ELSE. I AM WHAT I AM.

MANY TIMES THE CHURCH SEEMS SELFISH SO IT CAN LOOK GOOD. MANY TEENS AND ADULT HOMOSEXUALS COMMIT SUICIDE BECAUSE THE CHURCH DOES NOT TAKE THEM SERIOUS OR ACCUSES THEM OF CHOOSING HOMOSEXUALITY. MANY TIMES PEOPLE CURSE US TO DEATH TO OUR FACES NOT KNOWING WE ARE HOMOSEXUAL.

I AM CONFUSED BY THE BEHAVIOR OF PRESIDENT SPENCER W. KIMBALL WHOSE MISSIONARY COMPANION TOLD ME ON MY MISSION OF AN INCIDENT WHERE PRESIDENT KIMBALL KISSED HIS COMPANION ON THE LIPS. TELL ME NOT TO LOVE MEN AND WHAT DO YOU TEACH US IN THE CHURCH TO DO BUT TO LOVE OUR FELLOW MEN. I CAN NOT LIVE WITHOUT INTIMACY IN MY LIFE.

I AM FILLED WITH DISGUST AT HOW I WAS ADVISED BY PRESIDENT KIMBALL TO FIND EMPLOYMENT WHERE NO GAYS ARE, SHOVING ME TO AND FRO CAUSING ME YEARS OF CONFUSION, FEAR, AND WASTING MY TALENTS. I AM AN ARTIST NOT A BANKER, I AM A WRITER NOT A SALESMAN, I AM TENOR NOT A BUSINESSMAN. TO TELL THE HOMOSEXUAL THAT HE CAN NOT BE A TEACHER, MEDICAL WORKER OR OTHER HANDS ON CAREER ONLY FOSTERS THE LIES THAT HOMOSEXUALS WOULD VIOLATE THOSE AROUND THEM JUST BECAUSE THEY ARE HOMOSEXUALS. I HAVE WORKED

WELL WITH CHILDREN MOST OF MY LIFE. I AM HOMOSEXUAL NOT A CHILD MOLESTER.

I AM ESPECIALLY ANGRY THAT WHILE I WORKED IN THE SALT LAKE TEMPLE NO INSURANCE WAS OFFERED ME AND I WORKED OVER 70 HOURS A WEEK. BOTH MY CHILDREN HAD TO BE BORN WITHOUT INSURANCE. I SUFFERED THE INDIGNITY OF NOT BEING ABLE TO PAY FOR THEIR BIRTH. WANT TO HELP A MAN FEEL LIKE A MAN. TREAT HIM LIKE ONE.

I RESENT PRESIDENT KIMBALL ASKING ME TO RESIGN AS A CUB SCOUT LEADER SO AS TO SAY I WAS UNFIT TO BE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN. IT IS A LIE THAT CHILDREN ARE AT RISK AROUND HOMOSEXUALS ANY MORE THAN HETEROSEXUALS.

IT IS A LIE THAT HOMOSEXUALS RECRUIT YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE GAY. USUALLY THERE IS SOMETHING IN A PERSON'S LIFE THAT CAUSES THE HOMOSEXUALITY AND NO ADULT CAN TALK THEM IN OR OUT OF THIS CONDITION.

IT IS A LIE THAT HOMOSEXUALS ARE INTERESTED IN SEX ALL THE TIME. THEY HAVE JOBS IF YOU DO NOT ROB US OF THEM. THEY HAVE HOBBIES, SPORTS, TALENTS, SPIRITUALITY AND ALL THE THINGS THAT SURROUND YOUR LIVES.

YOU HAVE MADE OUT OF US LIARS PUTTING US IN PRESIDENT KIMBALL'S BOOK, THE MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS, WHEN IN REALITY NO ONE IS CURED NOT ONE. BEING CELIBATE FOR A LIFE TIME IS NO CURE. TRY IT YOURSELF FOR A LIFETIME. THAT IS WHAT YOU ASK OF US.

I WILL CONTINUE TO BE A GOOD FATHER THOUGH THIS EXPERIMENT OF YOURS HAS FAILED. I HAVE FAILED AS WELL. I CAN NOT BE A HETEROSEXUAL PERSON. I WILL TEACH MY CHILDREN TOLERANCE AND LOVE TOWARD ALL PEOPLE. I WILL NOT TEACH THEM TO BE HOMOSEXUALS. I WILL NOT TELL THEM TO LIE TO THEIR SPOUSES AND FORCE MARRIAGE ON THEM. I WILL NOT TELL THEM TO TURN IN THEIR CLASSMATES BREAKING SACRED CONFIDENCES. I WILL NOT SEND THEM TO THERAPIES INVOLVING SHOCK, PORNOGRAPHY, AND EXPERIMENT WITH THEIR LIVES. I WILL NOT STRIP THEM OF SELF RESPECT, EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING, HUMAN KINDNESS.

I WILL ALWAYS LOVE MY WIFE BUT I CAN NOT BE HER LOVER. I AM NOT THAT WAY. CAN YOU NOT PROVIDE SOME FORUM WHEREIN WE CAN SERVE GOD WITHOUT PEOPLE'S JUDGMENTS WAGGING TONGUE TO STOP OUR PROGRESSION.

YOU SEGREGATE OTHER GROUPS OF PEOPLE. WARDS FOR SINGLES, WARDS FOR NATIONALITY UNITY. WHY NOT A WARD FOR GAYS AND LESBIANS UNDER YOUR PRIESTHOOD GUIDANCE. ARE YOU TOO AFRAID OF THE REST OF THE CHRISTIAN

WORLD THINKING YOU ASSOCIATE WITH PROSTITUTES AND TAX COLLECTORS. ISN'T IT TIME THE SAVIOR POURS HIS SPIRIT UPON US.

WE WORK IN YOUR TEMPLES, SING IN YOUR CHOIRS, BLESS OUR CHILDREN IN YOUR WARD HOUSES. WE ARE THERE THROUGH OUR LOVE OF THE RESTORED GOSPEL IN SPITE OF OURSELVES. WE HAVE BEEN SERVING SINCE THE BEGINNING. WE TOO CAN LIVE AND DIE FOR THE TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL BUT DON'T ASK US TO LIE SO YOU CAN LOOK GOOD.

YOU DISGUST AT WALKING IN OUR MOCCASINS BUT WE ARE WALKING THE SAME PATH TO THE SAVIOR. WE ARE NOT PERFECT, NEITHER ARE YOU.

WHAT IF YOU WERE CALLED TO THIS LIFE WITH THIS SITUATION. WHY ARE YOU HEAPING PAIN, SHAME AND GUILT UPON US. DO WE NOT ALREADY FEEL THE PERPLEXITY OF OUR EARTHLY MISSION. I CAME HERE WITH A DIVINE MISSION TO BECOME LIKE CHRIST AND THE VERY CHURCH THAT BEARS HIS NAME DRIVES ME TO THE BRINK OF SELF DESTRUCTION.

I AM NOT DEAD YET. YOU HAVE NOT DESTROYED THE TESTIMONY IN MY SOUL THAT THE SAVIOR PUT THERE. I KNOW BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST I WAS CREATED FOR A PURPOSE. I AM NOT A FREAK. I AM A PERSON. YOU HAVE NOT DESTROYED THE LOVE OF THE GOSPEL I HAVE IN MY BREAST, BUT ALMOST!

SOME DAY MY LORD WILL EMBRACE ME WHATEVER PLACE HE HAS SET ASIDE FOR ME. NO ONE KNOWS THAT FOR SURE. AS FOR NOW I WISH NOT TO BE NUMBERED WITH YOU. I WANT TO BE A HUMAN BEING ONCE AGAIN.

I HAVE ENCLOSED SOME ARTICLES I HAVE WRITTEN AND I WISH MY NAME TO BE TAKEN FROM THE CHURCH LIST. I CAN NOT BEAR TO BE A MEMBER ONE MORE DAY.

THANK YOU AND GOODBYE

Earl Donald Attridge

December 23, 1979

Dear Brother Attridge:

The High Council convened as a court at 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, 12 December 1979 to consider your request that your name be removed from the records of the Church. As you were unable to attend, a decision was made on the basis of the information available to the court. It is the wish of the High Council Court of the Salt Lake Canyon Rim Stake to inform you that it was the decision of the court to excommunicate you from the Church.

This means, of course, Brother Attridge, that you are no longer an Elder and you do not hold membership in the Church. Your membership records are removed from the ward files.

All ordinances in your behalf have been cancelled.

You may attend Sunday School and Sacrament meeting but may not partake of the Sacrament. You are to make no contributions to the Church. Your relationship to the Church is that of a non-member.

Please be aware of our personal regard and love for you.

May the Lord bless you.

Respectfully,

Don F. Gowans
President,
Salt Lake Canyon Rim Stake

My Youth

My mother and father were separated close to the time I was born. I don't believe my father saw me when I was born. On one occasion my mother reported to my sister and me that our father claimed that his wife and children of his previous marriage were dead.

My mother was without a husband. I was a male child. My mother had seductive mannerisms, walked in the nude, and looked upon me for emotional support. I can't believe that these combined parental characteristics caused me to be homosexual. That would cause me to wonder why My Father in Heaven would bring me into such an environment which would overwhelm me as a little child.

Environment, heredity, emotional traumas, a host of factors could play an important role in influencing homosexual behavior but then it would seem that these things could also influence heterosexual behavior. I know that from an early age I felt no conscious attraction to the opposite sex. If this home were a breeding ground for homosexuals I realize God knew this information and sent me there for whatever purposes he had in mind.

There is a long list of close relatives who were gay or lesbian. My father's brother's son was gay and died of aids. My

Great Uncle on my father's side was gay. There were rumors of others in the near circle of relatives. Whether genetic, environmental, or just good fortune, I am gay.

I do remember a happy home, one in which my mother, my sister and I would sit in the living room and read. I sat over the furnace register, a metal grill work on the floor. I would usually sit there so long that the checkerboard pattern would imprint itself on my legs. The light from the floor lamp would shine softly on the children's book I was reading. Mother and sister were reading quietly. Then Mom would go to the kitchen and fix dinner for us.

Another happy time I remember was at the kitchen table. Mom rolling cookie dough so I could press out stars, half-moons, and gingerbread men. These would be cooked in the large white electric range nearby.

In May 1948 I was dressed in a little tweed jacket, shorts and buster brown shoes to attend the wedding of my mother to my stepfather, Edward. He would be my new father for the next seven years.

There was a great deal of violence in the home after they were married. Perhaps this was due to the effect of pancreatic cancer which eventually ended the life of my stepfather. He died when I was 11 years old. I remember my 6th grade teacher telling my classmates to be understanding toward me as I had lost two fathers.

As a young boy (ten or eleven) I had a space that was all my own, where I could close the door and not be disturbed. The space was in the basement of our bungalow in Kenmore, New York. It was termed the fruit cellar because mother's canned goods were there on shelves.

Near my make-shift desk of old dining room table leaves and saw horses I found a can of silver paint. I proceeded to paint a sign on the fruit cellar door so I could see my educated future in silver letters: Dr. Earl Donald Attridge.

Many hours of creative construction were spent in that little room assembling various things I thought were important to my childhood and life at that time. Two examples are a small model boat to sail in Lake Erie and a Tom Sawyer type river raft I sailed on Johnson's Creek near Lake Ontario.

One of my young neighborhood friends Johnny and I became intimate companions there later in adolescence. I sensed then that I was different yet I wasn't completely alone.

I spent many hours of enjoyment at a Methodist summer camp, Camp Asbury where I learned a love of nature and a closeness to God. It was there I met another boy, Salem and acted out a form of sexual intimacy with him in our cabin late at night when all others were asleep.

In 1960 while a senior in English class at Kenmore West Senior High School I was given a choice of a topic for my term paper. I chose The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints as

my topic. I don't believe I had ever met a Mormon. If I did meet any, it was the missionaries who went door to door. I know I met the missionaries from the Jehovah's Witnesses. I was attracted to spiritual discussion.

When I began my research the very first thing I noted was a picture of the Salt Lake City Temple. The building was the color of soot due to the burning of coal for fuel in Salt Lake City. Even then I imagined ethereal hallways and large gothic rooms filled with angelic looking persons reading and studying the great truths of the universe.

I was very attracted to that building. I felt that I would someday go inside that building. After further study I learned that only members in good standing were allowed into the Temple.

I did well with my term paper. I don't believe I received the mark that I expected, since my teacher was a hard grader.

I did go to the senior prom in June 1961 with a nice girl I met at camp. I double dated with a couple in my English class. Later we all spent time at a summer property my mother owned. I was more interested in the boy that we double dated with than any of the girls.

That fall I became a student at Geneseo State University of New York. I met Richard. He was very intelligent, spoke French, smoked Turkish cigarettes and was unashamed of being gay. In 1961 there were few places for homosexuals to go, so we went out into the woods on a snowy winter evening during a winter thaw, put our coats down on the snow, took off our clothes, and experienced each other romantically and sexually. It was my first romantic encounter with another man.

One of the professors at the college was a very well-known gay. I approached him with a myriad of questions. I really pressured him into having a sexual experience with me. He was to tell me that homosexuality would never be accepted. That was in 1964. There was no recruiting me to be a homosexual. I knew I was and I went to any length possible to understand myself.

My first year in college had its ups and downs. I was a flamboyant show-off, a cross between Red Skelton and Lucille Ball. This made me well known. I was elected by the student body of my class to the Board of Managers. I was also scrutinized by a fraternity of which I wanted to be member. They felt I was too gay so I was black balled.

Sometime during my freshman year, Mormon missionaries were teaching people in my dorm. I was the only one to show up for the lesson. I found the information very interesting. They asked me to attend church with them the following Sunday. I was unable to attend because they did not come to give me a ride to church. Apparently there was a suicide in the mission that week...

Several years later I experienced one of the great traumas of my life, the assassination of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy. My close friend Prudence Jean Moody and I went to Washington D.C. on a personal pilgrimage and walked past his flag-draped casket. I respected

President Kennedy, as I have all Presidents because of the enormous responsibility of their position. They are also like father images to me. So I felt the loss as a citizen but also as a son.

My Conversion

It seemed as though I was prepared to become a member of the Mormon Church through my interest, term paper in high school and the occurrences I found at the college I attended. When Pat Case, a fellow student approached me at the Methodist Older Youth Fellowship meeting we were both attending with the news she had become a Mormon I was further intrigued. Fellow students in the fellowship seemed on the verge of agnosticism, My interest toward this group of literal believers was increased. I do remember making a little fun with Pat, asking her if she was going to live in polygamy.

She asked me if I wanted the missionaries (college age Mormons who volunteer two years to teach the beliefs of the Mormon Church) to teach me. I made an appointment with the missionaries. I met two lady missionaries (now called sister missionaries) who looked like munchkins from the Wizard of Oz. They were little people.

These sister missionaries brought the elder missionaries to help them, perhaps because I had so many questions. I had been studying for the Methodist ministry but I was becoming agnostic much like the minister of our college congregation and many college professors I admired. I was searching for someone who had answers to life's important questions.

These sister missionaries were transferred before they could teach me all the discussions. One particular sister missionary was brought in who promoted a better atmosphere by being humorous and honest which lead to my conversion. I would later learn from her that she was a lesbian.

Sister Miller was an articulate, intelligent, non-conforming missionary and a lesbian. She had suffered a grave family tragedy and was taken from her mission. I felt as though she was brought to me from another mission and from another country to show me that I had a place in the gospel plan. I called her my centurion soldier. Her companion was Sister Smith who would later also play a role in my life.

I ended up taking the discussions (lessons) to the Mormon Church in a vacant classroom in the college I was attending. There were the missionaries, myself and often Pat who followed me through until my baptism meeting weekly to share Gospel truths I had never heard before.

I was particularly amazed when the missionaries pointed out the scripture Exodus 24:9-10. " Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. "

It was a crucial scripture since the missionaries were telling me that Joseph Smith saw The Father and The Son in the sacred grove near Palmyra, New York. I had been instructed by my home church and came to understand that no one ever saw God. But there it was in the scriptures. I was impressed with the elders believing these things and to see this special lady missionary believe and serve as a missionary. I held hope that I was good enough to become a member of this impressive Church.

In the second floor apartment of the elder missionaries I was taught what was known as the Fifth Discussion concerning Eternal Progression, The degrees of glory (Heaven) and the last judgement. While being taught these eternal truths, I felt a soft warmth of light spreading throughout the dimly lit room. It seemed to touch me at first like a glowing within, and then it went to the others in the room. This witness of the Holy Ghost would occur to me throughout my life in similar manner. First there is a warm glow then a burning within my body and finally a warmth that moves me to tears. It is like love has come to teach me the truth. (And it is not heart burn.)

It wasn't enough to teach me just the principles of the Church but encouraged by Sister Miller, we all were to go to the Hill Cumorah, Joseph Smith's House, and the Sacred Grove. We were just miles away from those sights.

On a cold February morning in 1964 the sister missionaries, elders missionaries and I drove to the Smith home to share the sixth and final lesson. The discussion was given in what was considered Joseph Smith's bedroom in this farm home outside Palmyra, New York.

It was February in New York State so the Sacred Grove was white with snow. We all knelt in prayer on a blanket in the snow. There was not any overwhelming witness for me at this visit as with the Fifth Discussion but to be in the very area where all these occurrences had taken place left its impression upon me. One of my favorite hymns in the Mormon Church at that time of conversion was THE SPIRIT OF GOD LIKE A FIRE IS BURNING. The missionaries and I sang it as we drove every Sunday to the little Perry Branch chapel to attend the classes in Priesthood, Sunday School, Sacrament, and what was called Mutual Improvement Association. There at the chapel, very humble kind people further taught me gospel principles through their words and actions.

On February 27, 1964 we were driving to the chapel for my baptism. It had been a blustery day with occasional sunshine. The interior of the small chapel was very plain like a school room. One of the Sunday School rooms which were separated by sliding metal accordion room dividers was opened. The floor panels were lifted up revealing the baptismal font. It was the size of a large Jacuzzi. I was baptized by immersion by Elder Lamar Nebo and given the gift of the Holy Ghost by Elder Jack Weyland. A recording of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir played from its perch on top of the piano. A picture of President David O. McKay (then Prophet of the Church) hung on the wall. It was during the service that the sun shone through the narrow windows warming my body and my spirit and those who attended.

Later that evening as I was retiring in the privacy of my bedroom, the light in the room grew darker and the most horrible feeling came over me. It was so frightening that I climbed in my bed, covered my head with my blankets and prayed that the Lord would protect me. This negative feeling left and I felt a warmth in my being again. I became aware of the lesson this experience was teaching me: The difference between the power of Satan and that of the Gift of the Holy Ghost. I look back on this experience as further evidence of the truth, my worthiness to know the truth, and the realization of both powers that exist in the universe.

By comparison, there was no conversion to homosexuality. No one proselytized me. No one taught me lessons. The feeling was there from early childhood (age five) and eventually I acted upon the feeling. I was four or five years old when I had dreams about men in my life.

I was a young boy of six when I played explore the body with other naked boys. When I reached puberty the behavior was reinforced by my sex drive. I may have had a dominant mother, or experienced the trauma of an absent father. Whatever the case, I was gay. I don't see much choice, and I don't see much choosing by that little boy.

I continued to hope that my baptism into the church would bring me the strength and the ability to conform to the gospel plan. This would include the ability to overcome my being gay. I became close to a family in the Perry Branch. I even double dated with their son Josh whom I grew to love with time.

We did everything but live together. Rocked in the same hammock. Even though I knew I could be called on a mission in the Church, nothing seemed to dissuade my need to be loved by another male.

I became intimate with Josh later that summer of 1964. I remember sitting in a car with Josh on one of the roads in the summer camp I attended. Josh put his arm around me. I felt like I was in heaven. The occurrence consisted of warmth and affection. It was a fulfilling of what I wanted as a young child. It felt wonderful.

In those days there were not words like sexual orientation. The words were perversion, sexual deviation, queer, or fairy. Hearing any of those terms over and over when you thought of yourself had more negative bearing on one's personality development than any positiveness of a family home evening, blessing on an evening meal or any kind words from a Bishop.

Upon my baptism in February 1964 I sent a poem I had written to the Prophet and President of the Church, David O. McKay. It was entitled "On My Way ". My entrance into the church was not a sham. I wanted to be what the Lord wanted me to be. I believed I had found the true Church of Jesus Christ and all things would be possible, even changing my sexual orientation.

On My Way

Look at God's sky observe it way

It surely seems I've a part to play.
In this world of clouded fear,
We can make the darkness clear.
People have made this world of dark
So closed in mind they cannot mark,
The power possessed the heavenly hands
That molded the oceans, the seas, the lands.
I love this world so tall and straight
The trees, the sky, they do not hate.
They simply exist in showing me,
How really close I am to thee.
So at last I've found my home.
Much more to live, to love, and roam.
I give myself to you my friends,
For I've found my journeys ends.

President McKay was kind enough to direct an answer through his secretary Clare Middlemiss. Later I realized how lucky I had been to get correspondence passed her desk.

The daughter of his first counselor, Hugh B. Brown, related that Ms. Middlemiss, with the assistance of the Apostle Ezra Taft Benson, often denied First Counselor, Elder Brown accessibility to the President and Prophet of the Church, David O. McKay. President Hugh B. Brown was an intellectual. He sometimes was liberal in outlook on Church matters. President Benson was a conservative, having a son who chaired the John Birch Society.

My purpose in mentioning these observations is to emphasize my belief that often members of the Church including prophets and apostles may have their own conclusions, beliefs, and agenda. Those formulations and conclusions may inhibit progression toward necessary

revelation which could benefit gay and lesbian persons to survive and participate in Church activity.

March 6, 1964

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
47 East South Temple Street
Salt Lake City, Utah

Mr. E. Donald Attridge
13 Livingston Street
Geneseo, New York

Dear Brother Attridge:

President McKay, who is recuperating at home from an illness, has asked me to acknowledge for him your letter of February 27, 1964, and the poem you enclosed therewith, which he has read with interest. President McKay has directed me to tell you that he appreciates your writing to him and sending your original poem entitled "On My Way" which will be placed among his collection of poetry. He was pleased to read of your love for the Church. The President sends his greetings and best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

Clare Middlemiss

Secretary to:

President David O. McKay

In the time between my baptism and my mission call, I attained the positions of Deacon, then Teacher, and finally Priest in the Aaronic Priesthood (priesthood of baptism). I traveled to the banks of the Susquehanna River for a camp out celebrating the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood to the earth.

I remember seeing a member of the presiding bishopric show much affection to the other men in the campfire circle, and I wondered about it. These same feelings and show of affection had accompanied my conversion and baptism into the Church. I believed then that there must be a new way for me to express the love I felt inside for all these years in an acceptable manner. I wanted that affection to be in my life also.

I became friends Jim Clark who was attending the camp out. He made me aware that he was a recent convert who also had homosexual feelings. I can't remember any intimate contact we shared but when he moved to California his correspondence reflected his desire to end his homosexual behavior.

I was impressed with his scriptural counsel to me. "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world if he loses his own soul." Apparently my soul felt enriched by my homosexual intimacy more than fearing eternal losses. When all I had was the orientation I seemed born with then my soul came up wanting to be loved.

Although I would endeavor to change my homosexual orientation to heterosexual for the next twenty years, I had no idea that the future would be filled with such grief and pain. In the future came an evening with my father which would illustrate the difficulties as a homosexual, a member of the Church and as a son would bring. It is taken from my journal dated:

July 9, 1995 - Sunday- " I sat with my father, his wife, my half-brother and half-sister with their spouses. We sat around the familiar ice cream bar type table with booth seating in my Dad's kitchen. There was friendly fire which is typical with eastern people. (Friendly fire- questions which when answered honestly leave you vulnerable.) Where did you get the money to travel to Europe? Who are you traveling with in New York State? Is your sister working yet?

I was not until I had given them the gift of seeing pictures of the Ehresmann family's ancestral home in Oberkutzenhausen, France that the most loaded question arrived?

My Dad knew since I was 17 years old that I was Gay. My marriage I am sure was either confusing or settling to him and the rest of the family. I told them when I divorced and left the Church that my former wife and I disagreed religiously. I did this to avoid any of the painful explanations which for the truth's sake would be burdensome. I could not trust them with my personal life because they were for a number of reasons still strangers.

Yet still the question sneaked its way into the conversation changing a social type evening into what I felt opened up into a therapy intake session. Dad said, 'There is one thing I am still wondering about? Why did you leave the Mormon Church? '

Now all I have to do is send him this book. "

My Patriarchal Blessing

After I had been in the church for about a year I went to the Perry Branch December 13, 1964 to receive my Patriarchal blessing, I met with an unassuming yet theatrical gentleman. He was gentle and soft voiced. He laid his hands upon my head and gave me my patriarchal blessing.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

Cumorah Stake No. 290

December 13, 1964 Perry, New York

A Blessing given by..John W.Stonely.....Patriarch,

upon the head of ..Earl Donald Attridge.....

son of ..Earl Attridge.....and..Helen Luella Maynard...

born..September 2, 1943....at..Buffalo, Erie, New York...

Brother Earl Donald Attridge, acting under the authority of an ordained Patriarch, I place my hands upon your head and, as directed by the spirit of the Lord in your behalf and in humility, give unto you your patriarchal blessing. This blessing shall be to you as a guide and a counsel throughout your life.

Your Heavenly Father has already richly blessed you. As one of His sons He has guided you thus far and your life has been preserved to the end that you should receive the Gospel. To the degree that you abide by its principles He is pleased with you. When you left the presence of your Heavenly Father to come to this earth you were given a mission and all things have been ordered that you shall complete that mission and that you shall have the length of life to accomplish your work. You were sent to the earth to be useful and to this end the Lord has blessed you with the Priesthood which is a means whereby you can serve. This will be a power in your possession forever. Through it you are enabled by your Father to do good. You have the right, the power and the ability.

By seeking the counsel of those who preside over you and through those who are spiritual, with which you are admonished to surround yourself, you can be directed in those paths that will enable you to use all your talents and capacities that you may secure your salvation and your exaltation and this is a part of the plan ordained for you. From time to time as you go to your Heavenly Father humbly in prayer and pour out your soul to Him and ask. He will reveal to you those things you should do to be wholly pleasing in His sight and acceptable to Him and make Him proud of you in this life as He was in the pre-existence. For there you were valiant and He reserved you to come to this earth at this time when many wonderful things are taking place and when the Gospel is here in its fullness and when you are privileged to associate with His people. By obedience to His commandments you shall enjoy every blessing which is in store, for there has been placed upon the earth all good things which are needful for man's welfare and you have the right to call upon them in enlightening your mind, increasing your understanding and to be successful in your chosen career, and find joy and happiness in life. For it was ordained that you should enjoy your earth experience. The Lord has ahead for you many experiences and, dear Brother, all of these will not be easy but are designed for your welfare. You have the assurance that you will learn from them and none of them will overcome you. If you will place

your trust in the Lord and walk with Him you shall triumph over them all and look back and see where they have made you a true son of your Heavenly Father. For He has need of men who are valiant and faithful, honest and tall in their thinking, to accomplish His work here upon the earth. You will be called to assist in preparing the earth for the glorious second coming of the Savior and you will be given a part in the building up of His Zion. Because of His great love for you the Lord has selected for you a righteous lineage. You are a member of the family of Israel. The blessings which come to you, through your progenitor Ephraim, are all that the prophets have promised to that tribe and are yours through inheritance and you shall enjoy them through your faithfulness. The time will come when you will make the selection of a companion in life. Particularly at this time go to your Heavenly Father and counsel with Him in prayer, that He may guide and direct you, and after you have made your choice, be determined that you will take her to the House of the Lord and receive there the blessings that await the faithful. This particular blessing is completely within your power and you can receive it by being sure to follow this counsel. Based upon this principle, you will have a posterity which is righteous and be found serving the Lord from generation to generation. They will always bless you and be proud to bear your name. The things that trouble you now are of little moment. The Lord knows them well. He will overcome them if you will turn to Him and do His bidding. You shall be shielded from the darts of Satan. Your path will be hedged about and you will be given inspiration and revelation and gifts of the spirit. It shall be said of you it shall be well with you at the last day. I seal these blessings upon you through your faithfulness and I now seal you up to come forth in the morning of the first resurrection surrounded by your family and your loved ones. I do this by virtue of the Priesthood and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Approved:

I do not remember beautiful words. Nor do I remember any angelic outpouring of the spirit. After all my life up until that time was dealing with controlling my true self. One of many things I do remember was the phrase, " This blessing shall be to you as a guide and a counsel throughout your life."

My Patriarchal blessing has been a guide and a counsel throughout my life. When I was excommunicated, in a fit of anger I ripped my blessing into pieces and flushed it down the toilet. It took close to ten years for me to make request through my sister to obtain a copy of my patriarchal blessing. I wept when I read my blessing again and have wept over it numerous times since.

Many times in my life I have been in danger. My blessing reports my "life has been preserved to the end that you should receive the Gospel." When I was eight or nine years old I was told to turn on the main switch to electrical wiring in the house. It was during a storm and I walked through two feet of water and was standing in two feet of water when I switched the main lever.

Just a few years ago I was surrounded by ten muggers who pressed knives into my chest. I was informed by the police that other people robbed by this same gang had been shot or stabbed to death. I was thankful to have walked away from them.

When I was a teenager I was swimming with my two cousins. One of them started dunking me, making me bob up for shorter and shorter breaths. I was choking on water, gasping for my life. I tried to get out of the pool only to be pulled back into the pool by my older and stronger cousin. I pleaded to the lifeguard and other swimmers nearby but no one did a thing. This lasted for at least thirty eternal minutes. I thought I was drowned numerous times as my lungs filled up with water. I coughed for life. For some reason my life was being preserved. I believe this book is one of the reasons my life was preserved.

When I was in the church I just believed in the truthfulness of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. It was only after I was excommunicated that the sure knowledge was made evident to me and I knew that the Church was true with conviction. I feel now more than before I accept and know that the Restored Gospel is the truth. I know now that I have truly received the Gospel message into my soul.

I became intimately involved with men during the beginning of the aids epidemic. I took care of four aids patients some of whom had open wounds. My life has seemed to be spared for which I was truly thankful. I am not claiming that I am part of any plan of the Lord but I believe there is some reason why my life was preserved. I am convinced that I still have purpose on this earth. I sincerely hope that my book will bring about good. It is not my intention to dissuade anyone from believing in the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. If I wished to discredit the Church I would not wish so strongly to still be a member. I want to be a part of the truth only. The truth of my life will somehow have to fit into the picture somewhere.

" You will be called to assist in preparing the earth for the glorious second coming of the Savior and you will be given a part in the building up of His Zion." If I could help one Gay, Lesbian, or bi-sexual person not to take his or her life I will have felt that I had built up Zion for the Savior. If I can succeed in enduring this earthly experience as a homosexual which I do not understand giving hope to some person who can make a difference I will be pleased knowing I assisted preparing the earth for the Savior's return.

If I could show just one homosexual person that he or she can be spiritual, live commandments, and do good here upon the earth, then I will know that this Patriarchal blessing is fulfilled.

Though I was excommunicated I never felt that I lost the priesthood. After my initial anger from all the unhappy experiences left me then came the still small voice. It has never told me the Church, Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ is false. Nor has it told me that my love for another man is evil. It has taught me that my choice of sex first leads to no significant relationships.

When I have been beset with what I considered evil spirits I still invoked the priesthood. The priesthood power that "would be in my possession forever." The evil departed. Though I have been excommunicated I feel I have this power in my possession and I can cast out the evil spirits by the power of the priesthood. All I can tell you is that priesthood works through me still and I do not question the priesthood. "The things that trouble you now are of little moment. The

Lord knows them well. He will overcome them if you will turn to Him and do his bidding." I would suppose that the Lord knew what I would go through in my earth life. This life is of little moment and the Lord knows what troubles me well. My prayers, fasting, many breaks with past weaknesses and situations continue to show my efforts to do his bidding. I endeavor every day I live to live the commandments of the Lord.

I believe I am turning toward him to do his bidding by writing this book to end hypocrisy, to end suicides, and to renew the place of gay and lesbian individuals to the church and the church to this membership.

I don't wish to embarrass the Church. No one should think I am asking the Church to be subjected or ridiculed as a haven for homosexuals. I do desire that the homosexual could find in the Gospel, a place and a pathway to Heaven. We cannot find that place by bearing false witness against ourselves.

We Gay and Lesbian people are spiritual beings. We have testimonies. We are waiting in the wings for a place in the plan. WE will not speak the lie for anyone's comfort. If we are so repulsive to God let him deal with us. Let God be the source of vengeance. His Judgment is accurate. If there is any question in anyone minds realize we are your brothers and sisters. Love never faileth.

"You shall be shielded from the darts of Satan. Your path will be hedged about and you will be given inspiration and revelation and the gifts of the spirit." Even though we have been accused of being trapped in our behavior I believe that we can be loved by our Heavenly Father and by our Brothers and Sisters. If what I have experienced is not inspiration, revelations and gifts of the spirit throughout my life I would be forced to believe that there is not a God. And I know that is not true.

Every prayer I have had answered and every burning within my heart or bosom has testified of the truthfulness of the Church and the Gospel. Every spiritual experience I've ever had throughout my life leads me to conclude that I have been worthy to receive inspiration, revelation and gifts of the spirit.

"It shall be said of you it shall be well with you at the last day." I have felt the presence of the Lord very strongly. Perhaps I am coming in at the end of the day to be accepted just as those who started at the beginning but I am there. We are there to serve. We cannot serve as a subculture of Mormonism. Even the dogs gather the crumbs from under the master's table. We are not dogs. We are spiritual sons and daughters of Our Heavenly Father.

I want these blessings. I've taken a lot of time to sort out in my mind what homosexuality is and how it relates to the Church. I've studied the gospel plan and how it relates to the homosexual. I realize I am at fault for my own behavior. I also see much that could have been done to avoid pain coming into so many lives due to the behavior and the thinking of the Church. It's time to stop the accusations. Start the dialogue to recover all that was lost. The answer to this dilemma

seems perplexing. Has a Prophet of God entered the Holy Chambers of the Temple seeking an answer? Has it been done without preconceived answers? Has the process of the burning in the bosom or stupor of thought occurred? I hope I have not received all that the Gospel can offer me.

President Kimball once told me I would do something for the homosexual in the Church. I thought he was referring to when I had married, fathered children, and was active in the Church back in the 70's. However then everything seemed to turn for a loss.

It is now that I have been made aware of my usefulness by being out of the Church. I have finally "received the gospel. " Now I must prepare to be acceptable before The Lord and His Church. I cannot do that pretending to be a heterosexual person. I cannot do that suffering my life time away being alone and without companionship and intimacy. I have been alone much of my life but I have not always been lonely. The Gospel gives me strength even when I believe that more is needed for us to find a place. There are too many returned missionaries in the Church who are homosexual today, too many men and women counseled to marry only to flounder without direction breaking up their marriages in failure. There are too many teenage homosexual young people who have ended their lives because of prejudice, ridicule, and exclusion. I am no authority on the membership of the Church but I have spoken to many counselors in mental health settings and I am not alone in this quandary or with this conclusion.

I cannot see any point in driving people to murder themselves just because others may believe they aren't living the way of the majority or even as the majority thinks is God's appointed way. Do we really benefit the kingdom being dead?

So my Patriarchal blessing has been a blessing throughout my life. I have gone to it when all seemed lost. It has strengthened me. It has counseled me. I am thankful my life has been preserved so that I might write this book. It is not easy on the Church nor even Gay and Lesbians. I hope it will lead all of us to do good unto each other.

I too am a child of God. I was sent here to do good. "When you left the presence of your Heavenly Father to come to this earth you were given a mission and all things have been ordered that you shall complete that mission and that you shall have the length of life to accomplish your work."

This is the only mission that seems to be sitting directly in my lap at this time. I work with who I am. That is all I've got. My mission is to show my children that good can come out of being truthful before God and man.

"You were sent to the earth to be useful and to this end the Lord has blessed you with the priesthood which is a means whereby you can serve." I wondered all my life why I always seemed to be working so hard. I would help this person and that person but I never felt fulfilled or rewarded the way the world counts wealth and success.

But lately I see a pattern how God was moving throughout my whole life. Even those people that I was intimate sexually with I meant them no harm. I truly believed I loved most everyone of them. Each day I live I am reminded of loved ones who I met over the years gay, lesbian, bisexual, or straight who influenced my life, loved me, shared space and energy. I am not ashamed to see them today or in my after life to tell them how much I love them. I thank them for all the positive things they have taught me.

I baptized, healed the sick, blessed my children, and prayed by this priesthood power. It was as though the great tailor was sewing me to my next challenge, my next learning experience, the next person who I could give hope to and they to me.

When I excommunicated myself from the church I chose the only available path I had to regain my own power over my life. I was devastated. I thought I had lost the most sacred thing I could have had in my life, the priesthood. " This will be a power in your possession forever. Through it you are enabled by your Father to do good. You have the right, the power and the ability."

All the questions of unworthiness flew away with these simple phrases. Even though I had homosexual feelings I had baptized. I had healed the sick with this power. I had calmed the cries of loved ones. I had blessed my children. I could still do good.

When I rejected this power out of extreme pain, it was not too many years and I was calling upon the Power of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood (higher Priesthood elders hold) to protect me, heal me, forgive me, bless me in the privacy of my own life. I have never felt neglected, rejected, nor deserted by this Priesthood power.

Mission

August 19, 1965

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
Office Of The First Presidency
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

Elder Earl Donald Attridge
124 Stillwell Avenue
Kenmore, New York

Dear Elder Attridge:

You are hereby called to be a missionary of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to labor in the West Central States Mission.

Your presiding officers have recommended you as one worthy to represent the Church of our Lord as a Minister of the Gospel. It will be your duty to live righteously, to keep the commandments of the Lord, to honor the holy Priesthood which you bear, to increase your testimony of the divinity of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ, to be an exemplar in your life of all the Christian virtues, and so to conduct yourself as a devoted servant of the Lord that you may be an effective advocate and messenger of the Truth. We repose in you our confidence and extend to you our prayers that the Lord will help you thus to meet your responsibilities.

The Lord will reward the goodness of your life, and greater blessings and more happiness than you have yet experienced await you as you serve Him humbly and prayerfully in this labor of love among His children. We ask that you please send your written acceptance promptly, endorsed by your presiding officer in the ward or branch where you live.

Sincerely yours,

David O. McKay (President)

My mission call came late August 1965. I was happy to see both my parents and my sister attend my farewell. (meeting in the Church leading to the departure of the missionary) It happened that the missionary who baptized me was stationed in the Buffalo Ward and spoke at my farewell. I do remember it as being a spiritual meeting.

I was ordained an elder and found myself flying to Salt Lake City to enter the mission home. From there I was bound for the West Central States Mission under the Presidency of Wallace G. Broberg. I met someone from my college days on the plane and had a nice conversation with her. I noticed that some of the flight attendants were gay. This gave me the assurance that I was not alone. They looked like they were doing excellent work.

These are entries from my journal of my days in the mission home (Missionary training location) and my setting apart ceremonies: (ecclesiastical ritual designating me as a missionary for the Church).

September 21, 1965 - "The lectures at the mission home made it a very full day. My companion Elder Lawrence is very shy and very effeminate.....We had the First Discussion explained to us by three returned missionaries. I really feel like I can do it! Man is that he might have Joy."

September 22, 1965 - " Today Apostle LeGrand Richards set me apart to be a missionary for the Church...I really love the mission home. When I was set apart as a missionary all I truly remember him saying is "Beware of Idleness." I had a really choice talk with a missionary as I played the piano... I led the singing at the setting apart ceremony. President Joseph Fielding Smith was behind me -my knees shaking. After being set apart I sat behind the Hotel Utah and looked up at the Salt Lake Temple spires saying "This better be true. I have given up a lot to believe in this Church. "

September 23, 1965 - "Today was very significant and we had good speakers. I received a letter from Sister Peterson and Sister Miller. Still trying to learn my Discussions, Brother Brown told a story about Sister Brown and had us all in tears. There is so much spirit and fellowship here. I wish I could appreciate my parents more. Tomorrow I will be entering the Temple for my own endowments. Unto the renewing of our bodies. God must truly love us to create us to be like him. "

September 24, 1965 - "I went through the Salt Lake Temple and received my own endowments. I love wearing Temple garments. The ordinances there were beautiful. I realized much of my own failures. Three sisters came to see me. When I feel the spirit it's like a fire, but when depressed - all is lost."

September 25, 1965 - "I really appreciate Brother and Sister Brown, they are so sincere. I wrote a letter to the prophet today in which I told him how proud we are of him. The Salt Lake Temple spires at night against the sky- Holiness to the Lord. "

September 26, 1965 - "This is the last night in the mission home. Brother and Sister Brown - wonderful. The testimony meeting in which I said my poem. Elder Nybo talked with me outside the Assembly Hall...This too shall pass away."

I repeat the kind words that Elder Nybo spoke at my farewell from a copy of his talk which he gave me:

"Yes, Elder Attridge loves beauty, and he loves people. This is a part of the reason he joined the church is there is love here. Elder Attridge has always tried to help people and to show them they are wanted. I've always been impressed with his humility and honesty..... All of these are qualities needed to be a successful missionary."

The flight over the Tetons to the rim rocks of Billings, Montana, was the roughest of my life. I asked for the bathroom so I could throw up, and they gave me a barf bag. Well, I thought I had more manners than that; somehow I held it in until we landed. It was snowing. It was September. This was not New York State.

I was assigned to the city of Bozeman. My trainer was not ready for the likes of me. I didn't learn things as fast as he thought I should. He "should" all over me. He made great enchiladas though.

He spoke to the mission president telling him that he thought I was gay. His bags were packed. His mission was nearly over. What a test! A repentant gay man for a companion for the last month of his mission. I thought that "the man doth protest too much." I had to speak to the mission president before continuing my mission. The Church did not encourage anyone with moral problems to go on a mission. My Bishop had sensed my being Gay but he saw potential in me to serve the Lord.

The Mission President, Wallace Broberg tried to make it as comfortable as possible for me. I remember a comment which may have been used to make me open up. It had to do with "let your hair pins down. Just between us girls. "He had that kind of sense of humor. He and his lovely wife gave strong leadership to us while seeing our humanness. I cannot imagine finding a Mission President with such insight, forgiveness and mercy.

I told him I was a homosexual but had been "morally clean" for quite a long time (for me). I believe he really sought wisdom from God for he sent me back to Bozeman and gave me a very kind companion, Elder Brown.

Elder Brown became the district leader and from that point on I remained a leader's companion until the end of my mission. Elder Brown changed the living conditions so I was not so isolated. Before this time I was housed in a separate apartment next to my companion. He was a friend to me and I started to learn the Discussions and scriptures.

It was during the first year of the mission that I felt I wanted to reach more than the dozen or so converts my companion, myself and the Lord could baptize. So I obtained the directory to Kenmore Methodist Church and wrote a letter to explain my conversion to the Church. There was an article about it printed in the Church News (official Mormon Church newsletter) and I was later to learn several families and persons became members of the Church through this letter as the first steps introducing them to the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ.

June 1, 1966

Earl Donald Attridge
1848 Rimrock Road
Box 1797
Billings, Montana

Dear Dr. and Mrs. Franklin Zentz: (minister's name used for example)

This is probably the most honest letter I have ever written. I was baptized a Methodist. I was raised a Methodist. I was Vice President of the Methodist Youth Fellowship. I was an alternate representative to the official board of Kenmore Methodist Church. I accompanied the official representative to the United Council of Churches for the Kenmore Methodist Youth. I was in the choirs of Kenmore Methodist Church for 10 years. I was preparing to be a Methodist minister. I aided in serving communion to the class in which I graduated from Kenmore West Senior High School. I am acquainted with almost every phase of Methodism.

I am now a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, more commonly known as the Mormon Church. I became a member of the Church on February 27, 1964. I am now serving as a full time missionary of the Church, spending two years in the West Central States Mission in the United States of America.

In my quest to understand my relationship to God, I constantly asked myself, "What kind of a God do I believe in?" The answer was of confusion. For as many of the different Methodist Churches in the world, there are equally the same number of concepts of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost, and man's purpose in life.

The central figure in the Latter-Day Saint religion is the Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ, after whom the Church was named and by whose authority it was established and operates. As I proceed with this letter, I will explain why we believe that Jesus Christ is literally the head of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

The Church is neither "Protestant" nor "reformed". It is the "Restored Church", re-established by the Lord in our own time, with the same authority, organization, principles, and ordinances, which He brought to the earth 2,000 years ago. Just as in the time of Christ, the Church today has a Quorum of Twelve Apostles and a Prophet who receives revelations from the Lord. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.." (Ephesians 2nd Chapter)

Today we sustain the President of the Church, David O. McKay, as prophet, seer, and revelator. Latter-day Saints are not exceeded, per capita, by any other group in their rate of college graduates. Mormons have the lowest death rate, the highest birth rate, the lowest infant mortality rate, and the lowest divorce rate than any other faith. The L.D.S. Church has a Welfare Program second to none. Hours after the recent Chilean earthquake the L.D.S. Church was the first group on the scene with 10 plane loads of food, blankets, and clothing for the Chilean people. The L.D.S. Church has more people in "Who's Who in America", and on the rolls of Science Honor Societies, per capita, than any other faith. Count Leo Tolstoy once stated, "The Mormon people teach the American Religion; their principles teach the people not only of heaven and its attendant glories but how to live so that their social and economic relations with each other are placed on a sound basis. If the people follow the teachings of this Church, nothing can stop their progress...it is limitless...If Mormonism is able to endure, unmodified, until it reaches the third and fourth generation, it is destined to become the greatest power, the world has ever known." (The Improvement Era. February 1939 Vol. 42.p.94)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has reached the third and fourth generations. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. " (Matthew 7: 15-20)

It was through a vision that John the Revelator prophesied the Restoration of the Fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." (Rev. 14: 6-7)

From the time of the Protestant Reformation the people were being prepared for this Restoration. John Wesley did much to bring about an understanding of the realness of Christ's message. However, Wesley, took upon himself the right to choose Bishops and other officers to lead the group of Christians he organized. " And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. " (Hebrews 5:4)

In this, Wesley showed that he did not agree with established churches of that day. What alternative did he have but to form his own religion?

If they (Roman Catholic, Church of England, Lutheran, and etc.) were not in accordance with God, which of the Christian groups was?

Certainly God was not the author of this confusion. In 1820 Joseph Smith asked the Lord, in prayer, which of the churches he should join.

Joseph went to a grove of trees near his father's farm and knelt in prayer. As he was praying, he saw a pillar of light, exactly over his head, which descended gradually until it fell upon him. When the light rested upon him he saw standing above him in the air, two personages in the form of men whose brightness and glory defied all description. At this time God, The Eternal Father, and Jesus Christ his Son appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Later Joseph wrote of his experience, "who am I, that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision, I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it, at least I knew by so doing I would offend God and come under condemnation. " It was through the Prophet Joseph Smith that the ancient Church of Jesus Christ was restored to the earth.

Joseph Smith sealed his testimony with his blood, June 27, 1844 at Carthage, Illinois. Today the Church continues to receive revelation from the Lord, through His Prophet. A prophet to whom the Church can look for revelation from God, as did the Israelites to Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and the early Church to Paul, Peter, and John the Revelator.

The Methodist student magazine "Motive ", recently ran an obituary of God in newspaper style:

"Atlanta, Georgia., Nov. 9. God, creator of the universe, principle deity of the world's Jews, ultimate reality of Christians, and most eminent of all divinities, died late yesterday during major surgery undertaken to correct a massive diminishing influence. "

Why is there this diminishing influence in the world? In this world of war and confusion, who could possibly believe in a God that isn't the same today, yesterday, and forever in revealing his will to men. Is it so fantastic, that God could speak to man in our own time? Isn't this the very day which Isaiah foretold,

"Forasmuch as people draw near me with their mouths, and with their lips do honour me, But have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men; Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." (Isaiah 29: 13-14) It is no wonder the Prophet Joseph Smith declared, "He whom ye ignorantly serve, declare I unto you."

The Marvelous work has been done. The Church of Jesus Christ is restored to the earth. I know that this is true, I cannot deny it. I am convinced that the things I have told you are true. As my testimony continues to grow, I wish to invite you to share in this message. There was a time in my life when I noticed this diminishing influence of God in me. At this time I went through diverse temptations and trials none of which overcame me. Today I share with you the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I know that God is our Father in Heaven. I know that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God, that he was literally resurrected from the dead and will return the second time to reign personally upon the earth.

I know that Joseph Smith is a Prophet of God. He taught as a prophet, he lived like a prophet, and he died like a prophet. My testimony is that Jesus Christ directs his Church today through a living prophet. It is my desire that you consider the things which I have said in this letter. May God bless you is my sincere prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sincerely,

Earl Donald Attridge

Even though this correspondence was a form letter being sent into over 2,000 households it was my way of trying to do the missionary work. It was my sincere attempt to share the Gospel I was growing to love with many friends and acquaintances from my past life in the Methodist Church. Into that period of time came a new missionary companion.

One of the last companions I had in Bozeman, Montana was Elder Bensen. He arrived by train and I was at the station to meet him. Elder Bensen was from Wisconsin and had attended Cornell College in Ithaca, New York not far from my college. He was interested in music and used to play the recorder in the bathtub.

It was as a companion to Elder Bensen that we had a most challenging experience. We were introduced by the Van Husen family to an investigator whom we called the "Bird Lady." Her house was filled with over one hundred parrots, canaries, and even a talking mina bird. I was also astonished at the thousands of African violets which greeted us each time we met with her. She was humble, kind and desired to be baptized in the Church. The bishop did not want her to be baptized. He thought, as most did that she was too eccentric, too different, not accountable.

Upon the insistence of the Van Husen family and the bird lady herself she was taught the discussions and was baptized. Elder Bensen and I were delighted for on her first Sunday at church she presented the Bishop with her meager but full tithe. She was accountable. She wanted to live the principles of the gospel in her last days. I am sure she was thankful that we were willing to give her the opportunity to show her love of the Gospel. I believe this is what Gay and Lesbian people are also desiring to do.

Sometimes what appears as a person who just doesn't fit in with the status quo really can surprise us. Maybe they wear unusual creative clothing, say things which are difficult for others to hear, or maybe they don't live all the commandments, but they are working on their life. How can we know where another human being is in their eternal progression? Isn't that why we are told not to judge others? God knows them well. He will deal with them.

I was transferred from Bozeman, Montana, to Idaho Falls, Idaho, then to Blackfoot Idaho. While in Blackfoot I seemed to get lost in the work and lost myself for quite a while. We were stationed near Idaho Falls so on our days off we attended the Idaho Falls Temple. I did the Temple work for my grandparents there. (ordinances on behalf of every person who has ever lived giving them an opportunity to accept or reject the Gospel message.)

There was going to be a Stake Conference (a regional area consisting of a group of wards or congregations) and the main speaker was from Salt Lake, Apostle LeGrand Richards. My missionary companion and I were there listening to the conference when for some reason they asked me to speak. I thought I was going to eliminate on the spot.

"I told the members we appreciated them asking us to their homes for dinner, but we needed people to teach the gospel too!" I was very embarrassed at the brevity of Elder Richards talk, verifying most of what I had spoken. I must not have been all that bad of a speaker after all, he was one of the great orators of the Church.

Being Gay is a constant fight to save face with yourself to feel that you are O.K. and deserve the right to progress. People can make it so difficult for you that these little surprise successes can puff you up in your pride. Being Gay also humbled me as in the case of my next companion.

Elder Moss, was a handsome blond from Utah and was a challenge for me. Each morning he would arise in our small studio apartment strip off his garments, and walk past my bed to the shower with an erection. I am sure he had no idea what it was doing to me. I managed to show him continued respect. We were able to do the work. I bridled my passions.

I continued to be the zone leaders companion, a kind of housewife to the leaders. I would be called upon to do duties of cooking, cleaning, and paper work while the leaders left to travel the zone.

I also had various companions while the zone leader traveled to other areas leaving me in the home area. I met many elders. We would rub each other's backs. One evening with an elder

from California we got really over-heated. There was no sex but it was very sensual. I don't regret a moment of what occurred. I wish I had time to get to know him but we were all transferred so frequently.

On one occasion I believe I was spared Heavenly wrath. In the Idaho Falls Temple I saw some other extremely attractive young men in the shower room and I became very excited. I felt very sorrowful for my behavior. I related this information to President Kimball later in a counseling session. There was a whole remodeling of the shower area to give more privacy and the Temple was rededicated.

I had hoped to gain a testimony as a missionary. I did. I hoped to be able to change my behavior. I did not. I just suppress my behavior. While I was busy serving the Lord I did stop most thoughts toward men but when given a moment to breath the reality of my homosexuality was undeniable. And so it would be for the rest of my life. I could keep myself so busy so as to have no time to "sin". In a real world with eventually real needs of loving and being loved being evident, the truth was I was that way and never would be happy pretending to be something or someone else.

However, I was on to my next adventure which would lead to a future full of forcing every known cure of homosexuality upon myself. Up to this point in my life I had five therapists and spent hundreds of therapy hours trying to cure my homosexuality.

Had A Great Fall

I was transferred to Missoula, Montana by train through the mountains. It was exciting to curve through the canyons, sometimes plowing the tracks of snow and watching small avalanches cascade to the valley floor.

The members of the Church were very cold toward the missionaries when I arrived in Missoula because of some unknown incident to me concerning previous missionaries.

One of the members was very special, Sister Clearborn. To me she was the ideal mother. She and her husband invited us for meals and did all they could to steer investigators to us. We taught lessons, went tracting in 40 below weather. We sang solos, bore testimonies, and some choice members warmed up to us giving us some leads on people to teach.

While in Missoula I was again the zone leaders companion and working with an assortment of other missionaries. When I met a certain Elder Carter who was quiet, artistic, and sensitive my months of celibacy caught up with me. I must have thought I was in a classic romance movie. I made my feelings of admiration known to him.

This information got back to the President of the mission. Subsequently I was summoned to the mission home, express train. I felt like I was in big trouble. When I arrived the President wasn't

there, but I was transferred to Rock Springs, Wyoming. It was a place of little beauty and very hot.

Elder Mace was at the airport to greet me into this land of dust, cedars, and rock. My goal had been to be instrumental in baptizing a total of at least 24 people into the church one for each month I was on my mission. It was here in my last area that I saw that dream fulfilled.

I don't remember getting along with anyone there especially Elder Mace. In the last month of my mission I did not want to be on a mission. There was a new mission President who I am sure knew my homosexual status. He and his wife treated me well. I lapsed into a serious depression not wanting to complete the mission.

I would soon be on my way to Brigham Young University but first I had to be released from my mission as an identified homosexual from then Apostle Spencer W. Kimball. I knew one of the lady missionaries who had taught me lived in Salt Lake City so I called her upon my arrival and she provided me with transportation while in the city.

As I made my way to Apostle Kimball's office I climbed up the granite steps entering the main corridor of the old Greek Revival Administration Building. I asked the security personnel where Apostle Kimball's office was located. His secretary had me wait in the reception room near her desk. I thought everyone acted a little odd toward me whenever I mentioned I was going to Elder Kimball's office as though they knew something I did not know.

I remember shaking hands with this grandfatherly person who spoke with a raspy voice, a result of surgery for throat cancer. I remembered hearing him speaking jokingly in a conference talk that he had fallen in the hands of "cut throats" (surgeons) while in New York City. I knew he had a sense of humor. He asked simple questions about my family and my mission. He said, "tell me how someone as nice as you got involved with the problem?" He told me that "I did not look like a homosexual."

Elder Kimball then counseled me not to be taught by Satan. I was instructed to be careful not to look at my genitals, nor other men's genitals in shower rooms or bathroom stalls. He counseled that if I were normal (physically) I should be able to marry and have children to change my homosexual feelings for heterosexual ones.

Apostle Kimball instructed me to repent of the behavior and become so busy in the work of the Lord I wouldn't have time to sin. He told me I would meet a nice girl and get married.

He told me not to prostitute my body to other men. It seemed I was being taught the Church's concept of the homosexual, the sexual one only.

He then asked me to kneel in prayer with him in his office. He pronounced a beautiful prayer and blessing on me. As we stood up he remarked that I had tears in my eyes. He must have thought they were tears of repentance, but that was not totally correct.

It was true that I wished at that moment that I were not a homosexual. I wished I could serve the Lord and change my behavior. I wished I could give him the real information of how I progressed in the Church. I had been telling the leaders what they wanted to hear, the truth was not bearable to them.

However, I felt that way every time when, as an eleven year old boy, I knelt on each stair going up our second floor hall stairway steps to my room. Once in my room I would read some biblical passages of renewal. I then recited scriptures that concerned Christ's last supper. I ate a piece of bread and drank a cup of grape juice in symbolic remembrance and repentance repeatedly. I did this throughout my High School days.

I thought of the many hours I visited old folks' homes, the widowed, and served in a hundred capacities in my old church. I thought of the mission I had just completed in this Church.

So as tears dropped from my face I knew I had done everything I knew possible to change. I had no idea how I was going to change my sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual. I knew that and that is why I cried. I wept for the hypocrisy of that moment. I couldn't speak to Brother Kimball about it; I could only cry. The leaders of the Church, the faith I believed in so strongly was demanding my hypocrisy.

He asked me to see him a few more times that week. I was to surrender some pornographic magazines to him which I had acquired. So back up those stairs, past the smiling security guards to his office I went. This time he was not there. He was at home. He also wanted me to bring him some papers from the office of Joseph Fielding Smith, head of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles.

Remembering the shaking knees episode, never the less, I went to his office. President Smith came out of his office and handed me the papers. As I placed the papers in my brief case the handle broke.

President Smith took the handle and wrapped some tape around it so it held. As I look back at that experience I was impressed by President Smith's concern and care. I wondered that perhaps this was one way President Smith might have had an opportunity to look at a homosexual if he had not had that opportunity as yet in his life. After all I didn't look like one.

I arrived at Apostle Kimball's home. I waited in his livingroom. It was a comfortable suburban-type living room of subdued colors and middle class furniture on Laird Drive.

Ushered into Brother Kimball's study by Sister Kimball I noticed his desk. It was piled a foot high with papers and books. He informed me he was working on his book. I believe it was the Miracle Of Forgiveness. He sat at his desk and I sat across from him.

All I remember from this visit is giving him the pornographic material. He said he would burn it in the backyard in a trash barrel. I have no idea why he did not have me just dispose of the material myself but he placed it in a brown manila envelope after he received it from me.

The last part of the interview concerned itself with my travel plans. I told the apostle that one of the missionaries Sister Smith, who had to do with my conversion in New York State after I was baptized would be picking me up. When I mentioned her name he seemed to redirect our conversation into a set dialogue.

He told me not to report to her what we had talked about. Then as if we were in a play he seemed to be acting to me. He repeated previous asked questions about my mission, superficial things we had already discussed in other interviews. He told me to let her know that we had been discussing my mission. This was only one of many puzzling behaviors I experienced with then Apostle Kimball. It appeared from my visits that Apostle Kimball was keeping a file on everyone Gay or Lesbian whom he interviewed.

When I left Apostle Kimball's home Sister Smith was waiting for me and as we talked she told me " you don't want to be one of those people in his file."

Later I met Sister Smith's sister in a gay bar in Salt Lake City. She verified that she had spoken with Elder Kimball. She was one of the people in his files. With counsel from Apostle Kimball on one side and these real people struggling as I was on the other I began to feel that I was not really able to live a genuine life. I must placate to my Church leaders, give nuances of the truth to my friends and what was I telling myself?

Perhaps the Church's program for dealing with gay and lesbian people evolved from misinformation. Of course we want to serve on a mission, be Sunday School chorister or genealogy persons in the ward. We try to tell you what we are like until you cannot receive the truth of our lives. We feel like hypocrites. We decide to serve no matter what, anyway. The Church leaders think we are cured.

Some of us may be bisexual. When we are confronted with a choice of membership, salvation, and eternal progression or eternal life it becomes necessary for bisexual people to sacrifice half of their desires to attain acceptance by the Church. For homosexual men and women to sacrifice all their ability to be intimate loving persons is an impossibility to them. The Church thinks homosexuals can change from those bisexual persons who hold the line.

I believe the Church more than any other group upon the face of the whole earth has the ability to know the truth from God through his servants the prophets. When these brethren rely upon many surface appearances a whole program can be devised which maybe built on poor foundations. Why do we rely upon ourselves when we could know what God wishes to be done. Has the prophet petitioned God for this particular section of its membership? Not based upon what logic has been expressed but upon the will of Our Father in Heaven?

Brigham Young University

The drive south from Salt Lake City, Utah to Provo, Utah, home of Brigham Young University takes about an hour. The University is nestled on the slopes of the Wasatch Mountain chain in the Northeast portion of a very large valley. Fresh spring water pours down mountains canyons from glacier fed streams and the snowpack of the winter months. The University I believe brought together twenty to thirty thousand students from many places in America and the rest of the world then. Many returned missionaries like myself chose the University as a continuation of the spiritual life we were trying to attain in the mission field.

I lived in a dorm-type apartment complex called the Moon Apartments. I was rooming with Lynn Whyte, the son of members of the Church whom I met in Blackfoot, Idaho. There were other elders whom I roomed with there but Lynn was very close to me. We had family home evenings (weekly Church wide family night) with other return missionaries, attended Temple sessions, went to Devotionals (religious speakers) in the Smith Fieldhouse. I got into the study habit again.

There were humorous moments too. One of the first days, I was completely disoriented in the new Ernest L. Wilkinson Center (student union). I was trying so hard to be straight acting and doing what's right since being counseled by an Apostle. The building was very new and as yet all the rooms were not labeled. I desired to use the bathroom. As I entered the restroom I thought it strange there were no urinals. You'd think it would register.

I went to the stalls anyway and sat down. Then I heard the sound of high heels coming into the bathroom. I was going to stand up and tell the young woman she was in the wrong bathroom. The reality of the moment finally hit me. My feet went up on the toilet seat with the rest of my trembling body. The young woman then sat down in the stall next to me and then left.

About an eternity later, I crept very carefully to what I thought was another way out. It wasn't an exit. It was a rest area with a girl lying down on a couch. How much more worse could this thing get? I let the door slide closed carefully realizing I needed badly to get out of this room. I walked to the door through which I had made my entrance. I opened the door carefully viewing the hallway. I slipped into safe territory.

I do remember several devotionals in which Ernest L. Wilkinson, President of the University, would counsel the students to turn in any peers whom they suspected of being homosexual. It made me feel as if I were a criminal. Just what every gay person needs, some more paranoia to add the myriads of other self-esteem eroding experiences.

I began to enjoy the classes I was taking. I had three years of credits studying in special education. I took exploratory courses to decide what area of study I should pursue. I took a writing course from the niece of the Prophet David O. McKay. I joined the Oratorio Chorus which was preparing to perform Mozart's Requiem.

I found a job working in the Harris Fine Arts Center as a janitor. My cleaning area was near the costume room. In the room the workers busily prepared costumes for the upcoming opera production, The Masked Ball.

There I met George a flamboyant costumier. It wasn't long before we were talking and I was made aware of a group of homosexuals who spent time together on campus but were very secretive.

George asked me over to his apartment. We ended up being affectionate to each other. He informed me that I had passed the "test." I was introduced to the other members of the society. There were rumors that one of President Wilkinson's relatives cruised the streets of Provo was one of the bits of gossip I was told from the group. We would often meet in the stand down lounge in the Wilkinson Center to be introduced to other homosexual members of the student body.

Often our group would drive to Salt Lake City and attend a bar known as Radio City, the Lounge. This was the first Gay bar I had ever been too. There were also after-bar parties where I met an assorted group of people. I was looking for love but I did not know how to do that and found further confusion.

The group at the Wilkinson step down lounge seemed to taunt me in whatever I was experiencing. In their paranoid hysteria they seem to mock my problems. I wanted friends. I wanted to find a companion. Many of them found life time companions as I would learn later in life but I found less than my expectations with them.

Then in the early part of 1968 I met Brent. He was an anthropology student. We were listening to music in the library at separate study booths across from each other. One day our shoes touched and I smiled. He smiled. We talked. I thought we were developing a friendship.

I grew to like him. But I just did not understand how to build a relationship. I didn't realize for a long time I was trying to have dessert before dinner. I also forgot the appetizers.

Where were my role models? There were none. No one in the Church could ever realize I just wanted to love and be loved. They kept making me think that all I could attain in homosexuality was sex. So I acted according to the prevalent knowledge of the times.

One of the guys in the gay group was going out of town and I asked him if I could stay at his little cottage. It was closer to downtown Provo. He agreed. So I took Brent there to share some intimacy with him. There were some awkward moments but essentially we both shared affection and a form of sexual intimacy. I thought Brent enjoyed our experience. We both went home. I expected to see him in the library the next week but he was not there.

My studies continued. I sang in the Oratorio Chorus Concert in the Mozart Requiem. I looked forward to growing closer to Brent but I could not find him anywhere on campus.

Toward the end of winter I was called into the University Security for an interview with Mr. Lauritzen. I didn't have a clue what security wanted with me.

I was brought into an office where Mr. Lauritzen informed me of a complaint lodged against me. There were no names mentioned. I was accused of seducing some girl's boyfriend. It still didn't dawn on me. This girl learned from her boyfriend that he had a homosexual experience. The girl went to her Bishop. The Bishop notified B.Y.U. security. From the information given to me that day I denied all the allegations and left the office.

I really did not even think that this was Brent or his girlfriend or his Bishop. I didn't even know he had a girlfriend. He never mentioned anything about girls. After a while I came to realize I had been caught. I had been trapped in a sad situation which put me in legal jeopardy now according to Mr. Lauritzen's second interrogation of me.

I was an implied threat of a prison sentence in the guise that Brent was under age. It was impressed upon me by Mr. Lauritzen to reveal the names of other homosexuals attending Brigham Young University. I thought this was ironic since one of the people in our group was his nephew.

I was suspended from the University and instructed to go to Salt Lake City for an interview with Apostle Kimball. I don't remember the interview, but in a series of phone calls he encouraged me to turn in other homosexuals at B.Y.U.

I felt abandoned by everyone. I received no comfort from my homosexual friends. I was broke financially and emotionally. I was more than broke. I was angry. I could not face this alone. I was in a panic. It seemed I started to believe all the things straight people and the leaders in the Church were telling me over the years about homosexuals. It made me feel that we were mentally ill.

I decided to reveal names to Elder Kimball, hoping I would understand more of what our place was with the Lord and in His Church. How would I be dealt with? What were the answers for being homosexual? If I were so repulsive to God maybe now the leaders could show me how to change? Maybe there would arise a plan to help all of us work out the situation of being homosexual and being members of the Church. I imagined a discussion group with all of the gay group attending with Apostle Kimball helping us all.

I was to turn in a list of people to Elder Kimball at my apartment. Then Elder Kimball called changing the place to meet as the Ernest L. Wilkinson Center. He told me to meet him in the basement Lobby of the center. I later would learn from a Provo therapist I went to see that one of the students in my apartment complex was homosexual and I believe this might have stopped Elder Kimball from meeting me there.

I went to the Wilkinson Center. Elder Kimball was an unassuming man. No one seemed to recognize him as he walked up to

me. He knew I lost my college job by being expelled from the University, that I had lost my college loans (essentially my support) so he said he would give me a loan. It was thirty dollars. I handed him the list. I then felt like I had betrayed everyone, even from the beginning.

I was to learn later that my name was revealed inadvertently to the people who were on the list by Elder Kimball. This put my life in trauma. The people on the list were very angry. One of them reported that another on the list would do me bodily harm. At that point I thought perhaps I deserved the worse but the people showed much self-control.

I didn't know where to go. I chose to run away. I went to Salt Lake City just sixty miles away to look for a job. I had little money. I seemed to have no friends left, so I ran.

I can remember trudging through slush and snow in Salt Lake City interviewing for jobs. I remember one job was working in a west-side warehouse. I wasn't hired. I felt like I had been given a death sentence.

I didn't know where I was going to sleep. I decided to go to the house of someone I had met in the Radio City Lounge. He was a security guard for the Church and a reported relative of Apostle Kimball.

He took me into his apartment. He and his roommate let me stay for a few nights until I felt I had to return to the Moon apartments to get my belongings. When I did return to my college roommates I explained I had some troubles and had left school. They seemed shocked but suggested I stay with them and find a job in Provo. I worked for some professors doing yard work.

I had lost my student loans. I was expelled from the University I had attended. I was lost. I got a lot of comfort from my roommates and little judgment. They knew little about my being gay and the experiences I had at the campus. I believe I told Lynn and his girlfriend what had happened. Somehow I made it through the trauma of that Spring of 1968.

Other people on the list started calling me. I was told that one of the persons on the list was up for an ROTC officer promotion and lost that commission. Another's teaching credentials were denied. Still another file was permanently altered so that his career choices had been seriously curtailed. Many were expelled from school.

I remember Jason a relative of a general authority was able to deny the accusations enough as to have not been expelled. It was Jason who later in life told me that Brad, a relative to Mr. Lauritzen, from campus security was hospitalized in a mental institution. He was one of those on

my list. Jason told me that Brad was placed on the psych ward of the hospital but later escaped. He ended up committing suicide. I shall forever be reminded.

The Flight

I stayed in Provo Utah until June 1968 when I got a ride home with some fellow students on their way back home to New York State. Upon my arrival home I watched in disbelief at the television coverage of the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy. I watched the television in horror and shock since Senator Kennedy had just visited B.Y.U. and I had seen him up close.

I got a job, through my father, at his plant but it was unbearable. I hardly related with my mother. She was on the verge of a third marriage. My sister was on the verge of divorce. There really wasn't much left of the family I knew. I moved into the home of a member of the Buffalo Ward. I attended church in the Buffalo Ward where the Bishop told me he knew what had happened to me at B.Y.U.

There wasn't a night I did not awaken in fear, remorse and guilt for turning in the people on the list. I went from fearing the persons on my list to fearing Church security. I became more paranoid and mistrusting of people than any time before in my life.

Then I was drafted into the army. I went to the physical with instructions to declare myself a homosexual as the leaders of the Church felt in the service I would find more temptation than I could resist being with men constantly.

As I stood in the induction office with over 200 other naked men I knew I was a gay man. Then after checking the box on the form I went through the further humiliation of standing in a line where many people could see my file which was marked Sexual Deviate in large letters.

Weeks later I was interviewed by a psychiatrist to determine whether I was qualified for deferment or that I simply was avoiding the service. The therapist informed me that he was Jewish and was upset about how I was treated by the Mormons.

I told him I loved my country. My country had given me freedom and liberty but my Bishop had advised me to be deferred to avoid further contact with temptations.

Apostle Kimball sent me a copy of his newly published book The Miracle of Forgiveness. I recall a conversation by phone in which I requested to return to Utah and attend B.Y.U. He thought that it would be better if I attended the University of Utah.

Nothing was really holding me to New York State. While I had been through such trials I still had a testimony of the Church and the Restoration so I returned to my spiritual home. I thought I would have family in the people who believed like I did.

In January 1970 President David O. McKay passed away. He was the only prophet of the Church I knew. The minute I learned of his death I felt compelled to return to Salt Lake City, Utah.

The first thing I did upon arrival in Salt Lake City was visit the grave of President David O. McKay. I stood there and wept. I read the poem over his grave which I had sent him when I was baptized. I went to KSL television station requesting to view the tapes of his funeral. I was informed they would not show them for just one person.

I visited Elder Kimball a few more times in his home and at other times in his office. He always counseled marriage as the cure for my homosexuality. I met with him in his home and finally paid him back the thirty dollars I borrowed. I told him I was irritated that he had divulged my name to the other B.Y.U. students I had turned into him. He told me that it was not his intention to do so.

I had been threatened both at B.Y.U. and at the University of Utah. At the University of Utah, I was threatened by the Church security guard, (a Kimball relative) with whom I stayed with in Salt Lake City after I was expelled from B.Y.U. He threatened that I would not be able to gain entrance to the University of Utah. I applied to the University of Utah. I was accepted without any incident.

The University House was a boarding house for foreign students, the very poor, and other students. I secured a job washing dishes in exchange for my room and board there. I made friends. None of them were Mormons. Applying for entrance into the University of Utah I was accepted into the School of Fine Arts. I received National Defense Loans to make the schooling possible.

I met a young man named Maurice, he was a member of the Sons of Levi or Order of Aaron, a break off group from the Mormon Church. I was interested in all religions so I attended their Saturday Sabbath meetings. We took a trip to southern Utah, into the desert to a place called Eskdale. I stayed there several days eating in total silence as was their custom, working for my keep singing in their choir and visiting their homes which were consecrated to a communal law of possessions belonging to everyone. A similar practice of things in common is called the United Order in the Mormon Church. I enjoyed the atmosphere of nature and spirituality. Most of all I felt their love for me.

Many of my University classes met in the old barracks art buildings on the University of Utah campus. I took beginning painting from Earl Jones a local renegade free thinker, 17th Century Flemish painting from Grace Vlam, and Creative writing. One day I was so hungry for lack of money, I ate the bottle of canned cherries and other food items from our still life in the classroom.

Elder Carter from my missionary days whom I had expressed my attraction was an art student there at the University of Utah and I saw him almost every day that first quarter. I saw him with his girlfriend and felt embarrassment each time I saw him. I think I was surviving.

Companionships, Counsels and Questions

I secured more lucrative employment at the food services in the Crimson Commons a fast food lounge at the University Building. I knew I would be able to get food to eat there. I was given the task of washing walls.

One afternoon I was washing the walls in the kitchen area. It was there I met my future wife and future mother of my children. She was washing a load of pots and pans. I was to learn her nickname was "bubbles" and it wasn't because she was an exotic dancer. Over time, we found we had similar interests.

We began to do nice things for each other. Mary would give me wonderful egg salad sandwiches from her lunch time meal. I showed her some of my paintings at the barracks classrooms. She liked one filled with lots of colors. It was an abstract painting of multicolored waterfalls. Around May 1970, she bought it for fifteen dollars. She paid me twelve and the remaining dollars became a joke I used throughout our marriage.

One of the first dates we had took place at the Promised Valley Playhouse when it used to be directly in front of the Salt Lake Temple on a stage platform with surrounding amphitheater.

On the second date we drove to the Great Salt Lake and I told her very cautiously that I was gay. She told me later that she didn't think she understood what that meant at the time. I wasn't sure myself how to express that part of me to her. All I knew it was very special having a friend. We spent more time together having numerous drives in the canyon and many picnics.

Apostle Kimball counseled me not to tell any prospective marriage partner about my homosexuality. It didn't feel right to withhold that type of information from her so I did not. I thought at first it might lessen her interest, but the caring had begun on both sides. It seemed an exploration of a part of my personality which was unknown to me with the serious concerns about marriage, fatherhood, children, and a distancing from the uncertainty of homosexuality.

Brother Kimball had told me without a family I would always be alone. I would be a leaf blowing in the wind aimlessly. I believed him and I wanted better for myself. If I knew the pain we would experience, I would have stopped everything with her then. As far as I could understand marriage was a way to please God, family, society but I was very naive to think that it would cure homosexuality.

Both of us were not actively attending church. Slowly such principles of reading scriptures, attending church, and prayer became a part of our lives.

March 4, 1971 - .." I don't understand how I can ever feel any different inside (because of homosexuality) but I am patiently trying with Dr. Bruce Goates therapist, friends and Apostle Kimball. I did ask the Lord to allow me free agency so I could have someone to love. I have Bubbles (Mary) and my friend Rick and feel I have failed them by being so divided but I'm still giving..to both..which has been the greatest feeling I have ever experiencedI felt so wonderful today when Rick passed me in his car on Fifth South and drove me home. Then there was this horrible alone feeling when he went home at 10:30 p.m..."

Rick was a bisexual friend of mine from work. He would talk about his girlfriends but give me simple affection and company. Rick also tried out his gay feelings sexually with me as well. We would relate to each other before and after my marriage.

March 21, 1971 - ..Alone most of the day because my dear friends were not near me (Mary and Rick).. Feel that I should write a book about all these strange occurrences in my life. "

(It would be twenty five years before I would take these journal entries and compile them into a book to explain the perplexing events in my life.)

As my future wife and I became better friends we decided to drive back to New York State primarily to get slide photos of the Hill Cumorah Pageant (Mormon outdoor dramatization). We could see New York State's historic Mormons sights and visit my family. Maybe I was also showing my family, who knew about my homosexuality another part of me I was working on.

November 18, 1971 " Now, please Father....I'm tired of the world, it drags me down into misery. I want to end the gay life and live the commandments. Walk one step at a time. Oh please Father NOW! ..."

This was one of many times of the continuous effort on my part for a desired repentance. It seemed an endless desire for me to force my behavior to please everyone except myself.

November 29, 1971 " Weak, but still want to keep my covenants.(promises one makes to God in the Temple) Called Brother Kimball. He continues to tell me to guard myself from any form of stimulation by covering my genital area when standing in front of a mirror, not observing my genitals when urinating, and staying out of shower rooms. "

To further advise me on this point he gave me an example. Brother Kimball said that he told a fellow apostle, Brother Howard W. Hunter to cover his genitals with a towel in the shower room. He had to keep reminding him to do so. This was in the Deseret Gymnasium where the Brethren took exercise. Brother Kimball made me to understand that this type of behavior was not appropriate. It made me think of the passages in the scripture where one of Noah's son saw his father exposed.

I constantly wanted to know why I was gay. I wondered why God allowed it to happen to me. I was particularly troubled after Elder Kimball said that "perhaps it (homosexuality) was a partial judgement upon me at coming to the earth before I was born."

I did not doubt his word. I pondered those ideas remunerating over them until I gave up thinking about them out of respect for my sanity.

December 11, 1971 - "Visit with Brother Kimball in his home on Laird Drive. Mary was in an automobile accident. She was not physically harmed. Prayer together before we visited Brother Kimball."

As we entered his house, I noticed his Christmas tree was decorated with a Noah's ark ornament which had animals in twos all over the tree. He spoke with me for a long period of time.

"Brother Kimball told me he was pleased with me, instructing me that Satan was only off for a season." I told him that my future wife knew that I was homosexual. He said " she is not the right person to marry if she accepts you while she knows you are homosexual. " I told him that I wanted to be honest with her and that I had told her. I told him that for me, telling a future partner I was not homosexual, would be lying."

I asked him to give me a blessing. He blessed me with good health, and success in my studies and social relations. He counseled me to be close to my Bishop. He seemed to be very demonstrative as he pressed his hands on my head very frantically. I thought he was going to pull my scalp apart. I also felt very uncomfortable about how he was leaning into me.

But perhaps that wasn't the only strange thing in my life, since Mary and I "shared lunch with Rick, went to Temple Square, and saw the movie Scrooge together " that day. My last comment in my diary for that day was "It was so good to realize repentance. Thank Thee Heavenly Father. "

It was during this time that I became active in the Church again. I had a wonderful Bishop, Dean Jarman. I showed my Hill Cumorah Pageant (outdoor drama production located near Palmyra New York) slides to many groups in the Church. It had become a spiritual experience for me and my future wife. We showed the presentation to members of the Church sharing our visit to New York State and the historic sites of the Church together as a family in infancy.

I constantly had to reprogram myself each day not to think feel or act gay. It was an act of suppression when it came to trying to avoid having gay friends, in my artistic expression or desiring human affection.

December 15, 1971 - "Only thoughts, but must not allow them. Such images are the first step backwards."

December 21, 1971 - " Spoke with Elder Kimball. I told him how difficult it was not to have anyone to love, to touch, to kiss. He warned me that I would die alone as a homosexual and that no one would come to my funeral. He said he had a friend who had chosen that way of life and no one came to his funeral."

I have only attended two funerals in my life, my grandmothers and my mothers, both against my will. I don't find gathering relatives chattering over a corpse of someone beloved very respectful. I am sure when they took Christ from the cross they did so with civility ushering the body quickly into the tomb. I do not believe the number at one's funeral to be relevant. However, Everyone is invited to mine.

It was during this visit that I confronted him about an experience which was reported to me while on my mission. It was an incident that occurred on Elder Kimball's mission.

I was traveling with my missionary companion in Driggs, Idaho. We were invited to a members home. The senior member of the house bragged about being Elder Kimball's missionary companion. He showed pictures of them both. He said that Brother Kimball had kissed him on the lips. I told Brother Kimball I thought his behavior was unusual for someone counseling gays. Not that I thought he was homosexual but that this affection was what I seemed to be lacking in my life at that time.

This former companion boasted that Brother Kimball kissed him explaining it like this: When Brother Kimball received word of the death of one of his relatives he (Brother Kimball) asked the companion to hug him, then kiss him on the cheek and finally asked his missionary companion to kiss him on the lips.

I told him that it must be appropriate to kiss a man on the lips if I could not have intimacy or sexual activity with one. He said a familial kiss would be appropriate.

I thought Brother Kimball's experience strange because he had always used the analogy of homosexual sin as a camel in a dust storm needing to come in from the storm of the desert. The tent's occupant or owner would be asked by the camel to let the camel's head into the tent so the camel could get out of the storm. Then the camel would ask that his neck might also be sheltered, then his body and then the tent collapsed blowing away in the storm and there was no shelter for anyone. He compared this camel's behavior to the behavior of the homosexual trying to trick people into joining them in their behavior.

I thought it strange that he would give such a parable. Elder Kimball further counseled " don't give up until your knuckles are bloody," This referred to knocking at Christ's door of repentance. Christ is the Good shepherd. The homosexual is the one who needs to knock at his door.

Many of the other things he asked me to do during this period included giving up all my homosexual friends and staying away from the fine arts area because there were so many gays there.

Many of those things were a part of who I was. I could give up friends who were not adding to my happiness but there were many true friends who were gay. How could I give up drawing, painting, writing poetry, singing music, and writing lyrics? I would be even less involved in life if I avoided myself. Still I made every effort to do so.

This suppression seemed to delineate a dichotomy to my mental health. It caused in me an inability for me to think clearly about interrelations with people I came in contact. Every employment situation and every meaningful part of my life had to be scrutinized. I was becoming increasingly "paranoid".

December 24, 1971 - "Everyone makes mistakes; it's human nature. But true repentance forsakes the old for the true gospel of Jesus. "

I had broken my fast of homosexual behavior once again. This constant denial and declare behavior was affecting my mental health. Looking over twenty years of behavior I can see how I moved from going forward to going backwards in much of my dealings with life's situations such as employment, activity in the Church, and everyday challenges.

I can remember that I faltered often from having self-control and avoiding homosexual feelings and expressing them. The attendant guilt upon my delicate psyche was overwhelming.

January 10, 1972- "I was offered \$5.50 per hour to teach oil painting classes in Uintah Elementary Community School. Classes start Wednesday evenings 7:00-9:00 p.m. A letter from Brother Kimball arrived today from Laguna Beach."

Brother Kimball sent me a letter from Laguna Beach where he was vacationing and recuperating from what I believe was open heart surgery. He confided in me that he was sad because his doctors gave him only 8 years to live after his heart surgery and this would not allow him time to be the prophet of the Church.

March 9, 1972 - "And again, a bloody knuckles fast." I had fasted to ask some very important questions and I was always doing all I could to keep myself in control of my homosexuality.

Salt Lake Temple

March 31, 1972 - "Good Friday- to see the Bishop (clergy over a congregation) at 9:00 a.m., Brother Kimball 11:00. I have been offered a job in the Salt Lake Temple helping patrons with their suitcases. I wanted to inform Brother Kimball of my job offer to check if it is appropriate in his mind for me to work in the Temple. It was. "

I was very excited for it made me feel somehow acceptable to God. I believed it was appropriate for me. Elder Kimball thought it a very positive step in living what he called "The Program" of

the Church which was outlined in his book, The Miracle of Forgiveness. " God loves the sinner. In a nutshell, the program is like this: (1) The Malady: Mental and physical sin. (2) The Vehicle: The Church and its agencies and programs. (3) The Medication: The gospel of Jesus Christ with its purity, beauty, and rich promises. (4) The Cure: Proper attitudes and self-mastery through activity and good works. "

At this time I also became a member of the Mormon Youth Symphony and Chorus singing first tenor. Jay Welch was the conductor with Robert Bowden, symphony conductor. But by April 29, 1972 age limits were imposed and only those ages 18-26 could remain. I was over age. It was then I felt a desire to be in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

June 19, 1972 - "I work in the Salt Lake Temple helping the patrons with their luggage. I feel so exhilarated when I am dressed in white.(all people who enter the Temple wear white Temple clothing) I help the people with their luggage. During my break I could read the scriptures or other Church books I have never seen before at my desk. I wanted to run up and down the hall because I felt so good. My future wife tried to get a Temple recommend (necessary affidavit to enter the Temple) they told her not until 10 days before her marriage. Called Avaired Fairbanks (Church sculptor) - spoke to his son. Might be a possibility of apprenticing with him. "

June 27, 1972 - It's wonderful to work in the Temple. I meet friends I used to know and there is the good cafeteria food. Brother Millgate (with sun glasses) asked me to come in July 17th to work starting at 7:00 a.m.... religious life seems so frustrating. Leaders make you feel inferior (my new Bishop at the time).... if you're not right there with prayers and answers. Then you talk and plead and you feel no answer. I get answers when I fast. Must I fast to get answers to all prayer. If our stomachs are full -God won't speak to us? I realize I have a long way to go...Did I chose my great sexual situation.....Interview with Richard P. Condie on Saturday (the old loveable crow)."

Very early in the morning I would help Brother Millgate, the chief engineer of the Salt Lake Temple or Steve Hansen son of Dan Hansen, the treasurer of the Temple.

We would be doing odd jobs. There was a lot of remodeling being done in the Temple. I remember being under the main east doors of the Temple under the steps, and underground. They were large steps of unrefined granite looking at them from underneath. I'd have to do a double take whenever we went outside to realize where I had been. On the outside the steps were polished granite, smooth and shiny.

July 17-30, 1972 - " I have been working in the Salt Lake Temple. I have been doing touch up work on the murals in the creation room and world room which needed mixed colors of magenta for mountains, green for shrubs to a yellow tan for sand and soil. Worked on a rock area in the creation room mural by the water and beach area. It was strange. I don't seem to be color blind (red, green) in the Temple. Brother Millgate said the colors matched and he was very pleased. I cleaned the beautiful chandeliers in the main foyer leading to the grand staircase. It took me

four days 8 hours a day because of the intricate parts. It was good the Temple was closed during this period. "

July 30, 1972 - "....It has been truly special to clean the Temple. I made the security check with Steve Hansen and he showed me the dome to the special room (the Holy of Holies), the place of the meeting of the 1st Presidency and Apostles, the towers (stairways), the assembly hall. I was overwhelmed. My Joy was full. The Lord's spirit has touched me several times as I worked, to tell me of the truth and joy of the true Gospel. "

August 11, 1972 - "... started working with Avard Fairbanks moving his plasticine studies and sculptures. A little disappointed. I thought he was perfect. But the knowledge I can gain is good. He's working on the angel Moroni for the Washington Temple....Dr. Fairbanks drives carelessly, smells as bad as the hippies he condemns, and gets into discussions on immoral topics which seem to undermine his personality. He is delightfully human."

I was counseled by Brother Kimball not to judge others especially when angry with another. So I knew it wasn't good to judge. I came from an area of the country where people were very critical. Even in college I learned to be a critic of art, music and culture, in classes I took. In life, because I was different and wanted understanding, I have had to learn compassion too, like anyone else. I appreciated many hours of good advice that did not confuse me as some of the other advice offered. I was thankful to Apostle Spencer W. Kimball for taking the time to try to implement the teachings he was purporting in his writings to me.

I did all I knew to follow his advice which I believed was a result of his inspiration.

August 15, 1972 - "President Harold B. Lee (then the prophet of the Church), spoke to MN Gleaners Fireside (Young Adult Group meeting). The congregation all stood up when he entered and were silent. Like not a sound. Roy M. Darley (organist) stopped his prelude music as well. President Lee talked about his call to be a prophet. He told how he and sister Lee were praying and they felt they could see and love all three million members.... when he bore his testimony there was complete silence, he asked us to pray for him....we sang We Thank Thee O God For A Prophet and he took his glasses off and He wept. "

September 18, 1972 - "....in the Temple I read Brigham Young's statement on the body and the spirit. I felt captured in the spirit and overwhelmed a burning throughout my body. The Holy Ghost witnessing that I had a spirit..."

It was like I could see my spirit body within me especially in my hands. I shall never forget the accompanying swell within me as I wept there in the Temple. This was one of many spiritual experiences which formed the basis of my testimony of the truthfulness of the Restored Gospel.

This is one of the spiritual experiences which I had which I can never deny. It was a witness to me that we have a spiritual body within our physical body. This spiritual experience would come under attack in the future by a person in the social services department of the Church.

September 28, 1972 - " President Lee arrived home from a trip to England, Switzerland, Greece, and Israel. As I was sitting at my desk in the suitcase room I felt an overwhelming outpouring of the spirit. I knew that President Lee was meeting with the Twelve Apostles as they do every Thursday in the upper chambers of the Temple. I felt the spirit so strongly that my mind was filled with the knowledge that the Savior was in the building at that very moment. It was like all the warmth of a loving Father who had wrapped his arms around me. Other people verified this same feeling throughout the day when I asked them. Many other people were impelled to weep during the moments we felt that spiritual outpouring. "

October 5, 1972 - " ..Talked to Mary Sorenson about my family (relatives).. how I want them to be in the Gospel. Mary bought some china and figurines when they were in Denmark and she wants us to see them. One of the vases is in the Celestial room in front of the door to the Holy of Holies...."

During the next few months I wrote many of the stories in Christmas Everyday A Storybook which I would eventually self-publish. I had many moments where my work was not demanding so I took these occasions to remember my past experiences and compile them in a story book, a sentimental narration. I was growing a little homesick for New York State and through my writing I would be taken there in my daydreams.

October 16, 1972 - " Talked to Brother Millgate at lunch. He said I could work in the Temple or he would introduce me to a Brother in charge of Cinema Arts at B.Y.U. He said stick with the temple and the Lord will lead me. "

November 13, 1972 - Monday " Up and at them at 2:00 a.m. cleaned the Creation room, Garden room until 5:30 a.m. Back at 10:30 a.m. to work in suitcase room until 7:30 p.m. "

This would be my daily schedule for the next year.

November 14, 1972 - Tuesday-" cleaned the World room and Terrestrial room, visited the sealing room in which my future wife and I might be married. "

Temple Tour

The following is a tour of the Salt Lake Temple in 1972 similar to one I went on with Steve Hansen as we did security checks of the Temple. I write this in an effort to let others know that there are gay and lesbian members in the Church and The Lord is merciful to them in His house. I have always been a gay person. I was a gay man when I worked in the Temple. I expected to be a gay for the rest of my life at that time.

This doesn't make the Church false. The Church was on a course of persuasion. They wanted me to give up being gay. My realization was that was not possible.

It does testify that this gay man at this time in my life was apparently worthy enough to be in The Lord's House receiving further " inspiration, revelation and gifts of the spirit " as attested to in my patriarchal blessing. My desire to be in the Temple is still with me.

I'll dispense with the entrances, the underground tunnel hallways we referred to as " the yellow brick road. " Often I would see the Brethren speeding around on golf carts down these tunnels as they made their way to conference. Many times I would see Elder Kimball after he became prophet being whisked to the back of the Tabernacle by way of the south extension of the yellow brick road. For safety purposes I will not describe the security headquarters underground in the Tabernacle area which I entered on numerous occasions.

The main entrance to the Temple was below ground. This led to the main hallway of the Temple. There above me were crystal chandeliers with rows of tear drop crystals. I believe they were Tiffany glass or Austrian crystal. I remember the many hours I spent making them shine with beauty with a mixture of vinegar and water. Then came the most imposing part of the hallway with the grand staircase which circled up and around into the next floor. It was situated at the end of the hallway.

To the immediate right was a room which preceded the Baptistry entrance. It was in or near that room I made a strange discovery concerning the fire extinguisher glass encasement.

There was a dark blue apron. It was safely stored there not being used between endowment sessions. I remember the design of the apron as a visual artist would observe. I intentionally do not discuss the particulars of what I saw on that apron or the endowment ceremony itself nor teachings received in the Temple ceremony because they are a sacred trust to me.

The Baptistry was the next room on the right side as far as I can remember. The baptistry opens up into quite a large room with twelve oxen in brass, holding the molten sea, now filled with water.

I was baptized there, as were my children, in behalf of our relatives who had passed on to the next life and who had not been as fortunate enough to hear the gospel with their earthly ears. I remember painting the interior of the fount with a blue resin paint as a sealer to protect this magnificent work of art. It was very imposing and took up a large part of the room.

Across from the Baptistry were two endowment rooms. The Creation room was the first room closest to the Temple entrance on the left hand side. The seating was arranged similar to a movie theater. They were constantly having problems with the seats which was one of my many odd jobs to repair them. The creation room to me always felt austere and cool with its mural of the ocean. Large rocks lined the coast of the picture. This is where I used my oil paints to cover scratches made by vacuuming cleaning ladies. Patrons too, sometimes got too close to the walls causing minor damage.

A door-like entrance in the wall in the midst of the ocean scene led from the Creation Room to the Garden Room. The Garden room was similarly set up like a theater. The murals were bright with greens and yellows and were filled with birds and animals of the jungle or rainforest.

One fascinating feature of the Garden Room was its elevator in the front stage area. It was a marvel that Brigham Young had these shafts built into the Temple even though the elevator was not prevalent in 1880's.

While I worked in the Temple I had visited the alcoves which were somewhat hidden in the Garden Room next to and behind the heavenly elevator. My work exposed me to many nooks and crannies that most people would not be able to explore.

Upon leaving the Garden Room there was a beautiful grand staircase. I always felt the spirit of the Holy Ghost as I ascended to the upper rooms and chambers of the Temple. There is a beautiful Tiffany window half-way up the staircase. The staircase turned 180 degrees at this point as it ascended to the next floor. The stained glass window pictured Adam and Eve by the Tree of Life. Through the figures depicted on the window I experienced a feeling of banishment as I ascended the stairs. Completing the staircase I turned left being on the next floor to enter the World Room. This area depicted the world in which we now live.

After ascending the grand staircase to the right was the matron's office or the registry. In this office are large oval type windows, the shape of which can be seen exhibited on the exterior of the Temple.

In this Matron's office and registry is a Tiffany window which went from the waist line to the ceiling. It is to the left forming much of the wall. I figured it out that this is the window which completes a large section of one wall of the Holy of Holies room directly behind the window. The light coming in the Matron's office provides light for the Holy of Holies stained glass window.

On many occasions, as I vacuumed I would reach up to touch the window with awe in my heart. I knew many beautiful revelations had occurred to the prophets in this room. I never thought for a moment I was unworthy to touch and be that close to holy ground even though I was homosexual. I felt that my Heavenly Father must love me to let me know His spirit and His holy dwelling place.

Proceeding along the hallway there was a spot where Christ appeared to the Prophet of the Church, Lorenzo Snow, on September 2, 1898. That seemed special to me for I was born on that day half a century later. I was told by Temple workers all the time that the Savior was seen within the walls of his holy dwelling place. I too had known the spirit of the Savior within these walls.

The Church is the program and it's time for an update to the program. The Church is missing out on our testimonies and the good we could do. I cannot believe the church would be the author of anything not praiseworthy. Ignoring gay and lesbian members if they wish to do good seems

to be not praiseworthy to me. If we have testimonies we ought to have a place to bear them in honesty

of ourselves and without hypocrisy. We are your Teachers, your Bishops, and Leaders. Just think you may have passed us on the grand staircase in the Salt Lake Temple.

Just outside the World Room there was an elevator. Very close to the elevator there was a large buffet-sized table. It was always covered on its top and sides with a lace cloth. The reason for the covering became apparent when I brushed it one day as I was cleaning. Under the lace cloth at the joint between the legs and the tabletop were gargoyle-looking faces, mouths opened ready to bite. These figures were out of place for nothing else in the Temple is unpleasing to the eye or the spirit. I asked why this particular piece of furniture was in the Temple. I was told it was part of a collection given to the Temple and had been there for a long time. I can testify that NOTHING in the Temple occurs that has any evil type quality in the slightest.

Upon entering the World Room I was impressed by the height of the ceiling which appeared larger than those of the previous Endowment Rooms. I also touched up an area on these murals done by another famous Fairbanks in the Church.

The room has a western American type desert scene with lions fighting in the front, waterfalls, and sagebrush. It gives a feeling of coolness. There are altars in most of the Endowment Rooms which are used in the service. The movie house type chairs are also in this room as well as the Terrestrial Room north of the World Room.

The most prominent object of the Terrestrial Room swirls into view upon entering it, The Veil of the Temple. On one occasion another worker in the engineering department and I were summoned on an emergency. When we arrived on the other side of the Veil other engineers were feverishly repairing what appeared to be broken lines holding the Veil in place. Working together we were able to quickly repair the problem just as the Veil was to be lifted.

The next room to enter was the Celestial Room. The ceilings are very high and gothic. There is gold leaf ornamentation and pastel painted rococo fruits and other sculptures coming out from the ceiling. I watched German and Swiss craftsmen gold leafing these beautiful ceilings. They also were experts in painting the pine benches in the Tabernacle to look like oak. The furnishings were similar in style to the gargoyle table in the hallway but without the gargoyles.

To the immediate left was an entrance which led into a series of marriage Sealing Rooms.(where marriages are performed for eternity) This section of the Temple was added on in this century. To the immediate right was the hallway that led to the grand staircase. Next to that doorway in the Celestial room was a sealing room with an altar. Another sealing room sandwiches the Holy of Holies entrance going east.

During my work at the Temple, the Holy of Holies double doors were guarded by a very expensive vase perched on a small table. The door was also locked. One day the Holy of Holies

was being cleaned and all the furniture was brought out into the Celestial room. There was an altar, table, chairs and a lamb's horn with a dipper in it, and the horn was filled with consecrated oil. As I looked into the Holy of Holies through the doors that opened occasionally as workmen labored, I saw a hallway which led to a small stairway and to a second set of double doors. The room beyond the second double doors appeared to have beautiful red draperies and the focus of the room was the Tiffany window depicting the first vision of Joseph Smith kneeling before God the eternal Father and his Son Jesus the Christ in the Sacred Grove. (the window I touched cleaning)

I am prayerfully discussing this information not willing to offend God but I do want to show how close I was to Holy places of God. The Lord found me ever so slightly acceptable that he did not destroy me nor stay my hand. I believe he did so that I might report these very experiences and beliefs mentioned in this book, and to testify that now is the time for Gay and Lesbian members to serve in the Church. I don't ask to go into the Temple, nor to be considered anything to the leaders except as a person with a testimony and a desire to serve. One thing I will not do is deny nor lie for the Church before God and man that I am not who I believe myself to be, gay.

The ceiling of the Holy of Holies was capped by a dome with up to six small stained glass windows which seemed to be in a flower pattern. This dome protruded into the next floor's dressing rooms of the Twelve Apostles and other General Authorities in the Church.

Back to the Celestial Room and next to the Holy of Holies was another sealing room, this one with a stained glass window. At the very east end of the Celestial Room, off to the right-of-center was a stairway that seemed to go nowhere. In reality the mirrors which covered this door facade lead to the Sealing Room where my former wife and I were married for time and all eternity. It had an altar. There was a large slit window on the east wall. On the exterior of the Temple above this window was an all-seeing eye, and above the eye the words, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

There was an exit close to the sealing room near the Holy of Holies which exits to a hallway on the easternmost part of that floor. It was there that I vacuumed and during breaks looked out the main east doors of the Temple's circular windows. Except for a quarter of an inch border they were frosted. It often reminded me that while I was in a most sacred place I could still look out and see the world. On one occasion I watched a Primary Children's parade through the clear section for a few minutes.

On either end of the hallways were circular spiral staircases. One day as I was walking down one of these staircases which ended below the ground I found a dead bird which I removed. Going up one floor from the Celestial Room floor on the staircase brought me into the room directly under the angel Moroni statue in which James E. Talmage wrote the book Jesus the Christ. I cannot remember the exact steps we took to the room where the dome to the Holy of Holies was located. There were pictures of many leaders of the church on its walls. There seemed to be wooden railings around the room. The dome came up into the room and lamp-

lights were attached to the dome, which lit up each stained glass window. The room was filled with lockers belonging to the Apostles.

There was a corridor and it led to the meeting room of the Twelve Apostles and the First Presidency. (The President and Prophet of the Church, and his two counselors) There were large soft chairs for all of them set in a semi-circle. Pictures of the prophets of the church were on the walls. In that area if I can remember there was a pitcher in the form of a swan with basin.

I was informed that this dealt with a ceremony in which the Prophet of the Church washed the feet of the other Apostles. Just off this Counsel room was a dressing room for the First Presidency. There was a large wall armoire with the First Presidency's Temple clothing. I touched the clothing slightly in awe and wonderment.

Down the hallway toward the west end of the Temple on this same floor was a dining room with the most enormous table I had seen in the United States. There in DaVinci type ambiance, sup the Twelve Apostles, the Prophet and God knows who else. It's magnificent in the most humble of ways.

At the top of the spiral staircases the rooms appear to be unfinished. The roof was entered through a door in the main east steeple. Once I was eating in the old Hotel Utah top floor restaurant and saw a man walking across the Temple roof. There is a walkway. I never thought I would be walking there on the top of the Temple someday. I could see how the lights were positioned on the spires.

The final ascent occurred when some repair was being made on the Angel Moroni statue. I was taken to this area that looked as if each room needed a paint job and purpose. Finally I was just below the statue looking at the famous pendulum type rod and ball that kept it in place. I was surprised to find the last slabs of the Temple tower leading to the angel's feet were rough and jagged much like the slabs below the main east stairway leading to the east doors.

This is my recollection of the Salt Lake Temple. That was twenty some years ago. I feel it's fair to say I have been the same person yesterday and today with the normal amounts of improvements most people receive with maturity. I imagine I will be very similar to the person I am now in the future.

Our Temple Marriage

November 21, 1972 - " Tuesday- Interview with Stake President Heslop. (an officer over several Bishops and wards.) (Every member of the Church is interviewed by the Bishop then the stake President to receive a Temple recommend to enter the Temple.) President Heslop kept saying I was a procrastinator since it was a day before our wedding and not relating to us so I told him to be quiet. I was just about ready to walk out. I explained I worked 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. then went home to rest, back to the Temple at 10:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. There was no other time I

could schedule with him. We also were following our bishops scheduling with his interview etc. I rectified by explaining what I had done to get to that point. I expressed myself as best what had happen, but I did not apologize for being sharp with him. He was a real.... Had a wonderful talk with the matron of the Temple Sister Edmunds. What a goddess. Ate lunch with Mary in the Temple. Endowment session in the evening with our friends. We went into our sealing room to get acquainted with the space."

November 22, 1972 - " Today My wife and I were sealed for time and all eternity. I was nervous until we started caring for our guests and forgetting ourselves. The sealing had some very special moments for us. The guests were spiritual people. My wife's parents were special. Grandpa Dye let me use his Temple robes. There were references to President and Sister McKay's life time romancing each other with a special thing done for each other each day. We were counseled to do this thoughtful consideration for each other each day of our lives. We ate lunch in the Temple cafeteria with our friends. The Temple workers gave us a Christmas tree made with dollars. When we went home we had a spaghetti dinner, didn't answer the door or phone. We were told our neighbors would march around our house making noise. It never happened to us. The flowers were beautiful. We are each other's forever. "

Our marriage was not consummated until sometime in December because I was very uncomfortable about having sex with a woman. I had never had sex with a woman. I spoke to my bishop to get some understanding on how to have intercourse with a women. He told me to start with massage, kissing and caressing. He was very kind and understanding. I believe he thought I came to him pure, but in reality I had sex with numerous men but never a woman. I was a gay. I would now be experimenting with intimacy with a woman which hardly seemed fair to my partner.

November 26, 1972 - Sunday " My wife and I were called to be cub pack leaders in our ward by our Bishop. Special thing: We bought each other gifts at Z.C.M.I. "

We fitted the cub scout work into our busy schedule. My wife was working as well. When you are called into a position in the Mormon Church it is supposed to be under inspiration. I felt it was because we knew some of these boys their parents and there was a real need for caring people to be interested in them. Few others were willing to do the work.

I was a gay leader of the Cub Scouts of America unknown to anyone else. I was probably not the first nor the last. I did not teach a single boy to be gay. I did not molest them. I did not recruit a single boy to join the ranks of homosexuality. If any of them were homosexual I did not bully them into subjection, ridicule, or condemnation nor did I endeavor to persuade them to my point of view. As with most heterosexual or homosexual persons sex was not a factor when doing community and church service.

November 29, 1972 - " Wednesday - cleaning in the Temple, still have trouble with who I am and what I feel (homosexual feelings)....Made invitations for a Thank you very much Open

House Party. We invited President and Sister Edmunds. I even invited Gonny the butch laundry lady who insults me. Special thing for today: Going on an old fashioned sleigh ride. "

December 1, 1972 - " Friday- Gave invitations to the Temple cleaning ladies for our Thank you very much party. Practiced singing while I cleaned in the Creation room and the World room. Good practice. I feel like the Lord is helping me to use my voice to get ready for Christmas solos and to sing in the Tabernacle Choir. Worked on Christmas Everyday A Storybook at my desk in the Temple. Elizabeth one of the cleaning ladies cried about being able to clean the Temple of the lord. Special thing for My wife: Played all her music boxes for her as she was to retire. "

Elizabeth was one of my fellow employees. She taught me a lifelong lesson. It is one I am still struggling with to master. She was a humble and kind person yet she told me she became angry like the rest of us. When she got angry she told herself asking of the Savior, " make me kind, make me loving, make me forgiving. " I have had many times when in the course of being persecuted for my being gay and my Mormon beliefs that I became in a sense, enraged but I heard her voice in all its gentleness speak those words. We never know what influence we might have on each other. Thank you Elizabeth. I wish I could have lived that principle of Christ's gospel as well as you did.

December 6, 1972 - " No sleep before cleaning the Temple. Up at 1:30 a.m. Mary and I plan to have a child as soon as possible. special thing for the day: Wrote a poem for my wife. "

Over and over Brother Kimball had counseled me to marry and have a family. I was listening and obeying a prophet's voice.

We had our Thank You Very Much party on December 16th in which I placed a sign on our front door, " This is the Temple of our Kingdom Bring Peace In." Due to the many traumas of my childhood I truly wanted this home to be a safe haven and peaceful place. I kept that sign. It is in one of my many scrapbooks.

January 9, 1973 - "Cannot figure Tim McDonald's purpose in my life. Here he is with coke bottle glasses. Strolling through the Temple like a nymph through the woods. Gayer than laughter. In talking to him I realize he is homosexual. I feel uncomfortable one moment- like let's get away from this person. Then good the next moment- like I'm not alone. And he's here in the House of the Lord. Then I'm bearing my testimony that he should leave the homosexual lifestyle. He's telling me a couple of men were sealed by another priesthood holder (illegally) in the Los Angeles Temple. Well I wasn't ready for that! "

I just had to accept Tim. He had a good heart. He was honest. He had found himself worthy enough to do Temple work so I just accepted him as being good enough for him. He was showing me what I would later want and need in my own future. It was purpose including Temple attendance and remaining active in the Church.

Tim was my greatest fear standing before me, my insecurity about my manhood. I learned to accept Tim for doing the best he could with who he was.

January 9, 1973 continued- "Wrote a letter to my sister. She may come into the Gospel. I know it would bring her happiness. She is the only one of all my many relatives who has believed what I was saying. Special thing for My wife: handkerchief with embroidered daffodils. "

I wrote a poem which went with the gift as follows:

Daffodils

Daffodils of Spring, nod before the sun.

Embroider them on a cloth, flowers and linen one.

Take this breath of light into each place you go,

Keeping it close by, melting all the snow.

January 16, 1973 - "I don't understand my course in life. I feel like a deserted ship today, left to sail the seas alone. It is difficult to be approaching age thirty without a career which is spoken of in my patriarchal blessing. Special thing for my wife: Queen Anne's Lace Poem with a pressed flower of the same name. "

Sometime in the first few months of our marriage after our wedding, we consummated the marriage. It was not that my wife was repulsive to me in any way. It had nothing to do with my wife. I just was not capable of any passion. I loved my wife. I was thoughtfully her best friend but just friends.

This brings in the question were my children conceived in love. Yes! For me it was one of the most unselfish things I did. I felt the romance, the endearment, the caring and the love but not the passion. Actually when we did have sex approximately nine months before our first child was born we both seemed to know the moment when our child was conceived. All I can say is that we were both enraptured by the spirit and this was after the climaxes. The type of rapture we felt was spiritual for me not sexual.

My wife was my life. She was my constant loyal companion. We were a team. We gave to each other all that we could, all that we were capable. I've seldom found that kind of companionship since that time. I don't seem to think I am worthy of that much intimacy with a man otherwise I would have pursued that course more skillfully and with effective feelings of worthiness.

I believe one of the reasons gays and lesbians may not find a long time companionship, though many do, is the result of trying to be worthy rather than having a feeling of worth. One friend

asked me why so few gays stay in the church, any church? If gays were treated with love they would be found serving the Lord. How do you love a gay person? With your heart.

A hundred picnics, a thousand loving visits to others, and even the beauty of new lives brought into the world did nothing to change the core of my personality. It seemed even having children would not change a homosexual into a heterosexual.

My wife and I shared many spiritual experiences within the Temple and outside. My testimony of the gospel was constantly being strengthened. The miracle of the birth of my children added to my respect for life. And Yes my dear children were created with love.

The Temple's Over

January 26, 1973 - Friday - " I want to stay working in the temple. Talked to Brother Millgate. He said perhaps a recommend (an authorization in writing needed to attend the Temple) desk job would come about soon. I seemed to be jerked around from job to job. Promise this position then that position. I threaten resignation and then something is offered. I refer to myself as the Lord's bell boy. I don't mind that but I want to be able to take care of my family and must get some stability. Special thing: Cleaned the floor and vacuumed the rugs at home. "

January 30, 1973 - " Tuesday- President Metcalf and Brother Millgate met with me today to explain they plan to put me on salary, find me work in a supervisory position here in Salt Lake or in the new Washington Temple. We have had bomb threats. Brother Millgate related if any bombing comes it will be from our own. Special thing: I had Mary's jewel box soldered back together."

During the next few years of our lives we endlessly and tirelessly did for others. Mary baked a thousand cookies and I iced them. We drove people places, home taught many (every member is visited by the Priesthood once a month or more) and encouraged many in our ward to attend the Temple. I was too busy to sin but I could think and much of my sexual energy in that time period was directed into the memories of the men I came in contact with during the daytime. The marriage was good but it was not helping me to change to be a heterosexual.

February 21, 1973 - Wednesday-" We read two chapters of Acts of the Apostles from the New Testament. We have read scriptures every morning and evening since we have been married. Played Christmas music for special thing today. "

February 23, 1973 - Friday-" worked on the cub scout scrapbook....I seem to blame God for my problems and I do. It is difficult to understand such a fatherless childhood, my mother's inappropriate actions and the searching and ponderings I now go through. While others stand secure I stand anywhere the ice is thick. My burdens seem overpowering and I'm moved around like a marionette from test to test. I want to progress so why am I complaining.....Special thing: I collected candies at work and gave them to my wife, Mary. "

February 27, 1973 - " Tuesday- Even amidst the personal failures and bad experiences my spirit today is bolstered up. I heard the still small voice inside tell me : you can be in the Tabernacle Choir, I ain't down yet. I wept as I talked and thought about my rededication to the Lord....made a card for Mary's special thing. Mary gave me a box full of gifts in honor of my baptism 9 years ago today." Thank you Mary.

March 12, 1973 - " Monday- ...Helped with directing the missionaries as they completed their endowments (ordinances in the Temple), saw President Broberg, my Mission president. He gave me a big hug and told the missionaries I was one of his Montana elders...."

April 11, 1973 - "Wednesday- My spirits lifted today. Brother Millgate said he would talk to me about a new job....I wonder if I am making Mary happy."

This is what I wondered. Was our marriage just one of respect? It was a loving relationship but there was something missing, a romance, a passion that I believe is so necessary to a marriage relationship. This has caused me great sorrow and confusion and depression to think that I interfered with Mary's life in making it impossible for her to receive the love she deserved with me. Our passion was seldom expressed and it wasn't fair to her or me to pretend to be something I am not!

June 16, 1973 - "Saturday- As Mary and I walked down Main Street in front of the Temple. The moment we passed the walled area and walked by the grill work area the spirit was overwhelming. We were directly in front of the East side of the Temple. The spirit of the Lord was so strong, we were very moved. I started to go ask the others walking by if they felt that feeling. But they seem to be in such a hurry. The moment we passed the grill work which had given us the view of the front of the Temple the feeling stopped. Special thing: "Grandfather chair."

This feeling of the spirit of the Lord was similar a few years previous when my sister flew to Salt Lake City with her children to visit. Even though my sister said she had a drink on the airplane trip before arrival she felt the spirit of the Lord on Temple Square. We took her there directly upon arriving.

June 19, 1973 - "Brother Millgate said they got me \$ 2.00 per hour total. I was getting \$1.80 per hour. How can I raise a family on that kind of money blessings or no blessings as a Church employee?"

July 16, 1973 - " Monday- Worked cleaning in the Temple 3:00 a.m.to 11:00 with Steve Hansen. Brother Millgate informed me my raise of 2:00 per hour was not approved. It would not come till September or even later. I felt discouraged and went home right away. Special thing: Strawberry Ice cream cup with a sign = Happy Strawberry you ole cranberry"

July 17, 1973 - "Tuesday - Steve took me on the fourth floor to help him. I love it there. I like the long last supper table in the dining room area. We straightened the Twelve apostles' chairs and the first Presidency chairs. The prophets' pictures were hung around the room. I sat down in the some of the chairs. (You never know just how very close we are.) Brother Dan Hansen (Treasurer of the Temple) was complaining about my sideburns being too long. He complains that I talk to the patrons and workers too much. Special thing: Lantern in Bedroom for Mary. "

July 20, 1973 - " Friday - We are celebrating Christmas in July in honor of the Christmas in July we celebrated with my sister and her children when they visited a few years ago. It has become a family tradition. We have the same potted tree we used. We make presents; Mary cooks Christmas cookies and fudge. We decorated the Christmas tree tonight..... Vacuumed in the Temple. President Kimball (now President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles) came through the celestial room where I was vacuuming. He had visitors from Brazil with him and was giving them a tour of the Temple.

I saw the furniture from the Holy of Holies. The door was also opened as workers entered to do some kind of work. I could see the hallway, the small riser of stairs, red draperies and the first vision stained glass window. Special thing: Put away Mary's things. "

July 21, 1973 - " Saturday- " Mary and I got up real early and got the turkey cooling. I frosted the cookies for the Cubs Scouts. We took Larry, Paul, Ken, Frank and Tony up the Alpine Loop to Timpooneke (near Provo) by the glacier. We hiked within the mountain heights. As we walked with them in a beautiful meadow each one came close to us for a hug one at a time. It was a very rewarding day. Special thing: Mary opened the wrapped up presents of desert dishes and soup bowls, with rose bud pattern."

President Kimball had told me that I should not be a Cub Scout leader. He told me to resign as the young boys would be a temptation to me. I wasn't attracted to young children. This kind of advice only further confused me causing me to feel like a split personality. I felt like I was one thing to him and something else to the public. It caused me self-doubting and anxiety. I believe President Kimball was caught up in the fears and beliefs of the day. Why lean on the arm of man when you can talk to the Lord face to face?

July 23, 1973 - "Monday- Saw Richard P. Condie at the Gulf station. Perhaps the time soon will come for me to be in the Lord's Choir. Special thing: Mary Poppins and generating a feeling of Christmas. "

August 7, 1973 - "Tuesday - Worked in the Temple.... moved chairs into the marriage waiting room. Took chairs to the 5th floor Assembly Hall. While I worked I practiced trying out for the Tabernacle Choir. I sang Oh How Lovely Was The Morning, (a Mormon Hymn) Christ The Lord Is Risen Today. I sang some songs by Palestrina- O Magnum Mysterium, and Ave Maria in Latin. The Lord didn't seem to mind. I felt complete peace. Mary went to the doctor and heard the baby's heartbeat. Special thing: Tried to make Mary feel better from a stomach ache. "

August 9, 1973 - "Thursday - We presented the Hill Cumorah Pageant Slides. We have made this presentation over twenty times since 1971 - to over 500 people. The largest group was 200 at the Millcreek Stake Center. Lunch with Steve Hansen. Talked about his parents hitting him. Special thing : mints from Maria Hirt."

During this time my wife and I fasted and prayed to find another job for me as the pay from my job in the Temple was insufficient to raise a family. I had tired of the unfulfilled promises. I resigned my position in the Temple to look for other work.

I also met Wally and his wife in the Temple as they were sealing their little girl to them. Wally was to become very close to me. We shared family home evening, picnic and church functions together. Later he would divorce as I did and we would be involved in a short affair.

September 25, 1973 - Tuesday- "Called Church Personnel Employment. Made appointment with Don Hansen (not the treasurer of the Temple.) As I sat in Don Hansen's office I felt so discouraged and all the job offers seemed foreign. I looked down at the Temple from the Church Office Building and especially the annex where I used to work. I told Brother Hansen how I missed working in the Temple.

He pointed out that I should have qualified for insurance working 30 hours weekly. I was working sometimes 70 hours weekly. Don had me fill out another application. Special thing: Christmas card. "

October 4, 1973 - "Thursday- meeting with Dan Hansen, Derek Metcalf and Lynn Millgate. Brother Hansen (treasurer of the Temple) keeping me outside his office said he would call for me in a moment.

Once I was in his office He said," Now that I couldn't find a job in the outside world I came crawling back to them. I said that is not true. I had four other job possibilities but I did not want them. I also mentioned my old job in the Temple was supposed to offer benefits after 30 hours a week. Under those circumstances I wanted my position back.

Brother Millgate said the position was filled but I could be on maintenance. Brother Hansen then said "Did you think you were indispensable and we wouldn't fill your vacancy. " I said this wasn't my purpose in coming to them. I was told by personnel and the President of the Temple, President Edmunds that my position was available.

I believe the most incomprehensible part of the meeting occurred when I was offered maintenance work M-F or T-Saturday. Brother Hansen asked me if I had made a decision, he had to have it then. I told them I wanted to consult my wife and pray to the Lord about the decision. At this Brother Hansen lowered his head in displeasure and shook his head. I could not believe that he would mock this principle of my spirituality. I thought I was in the presence of a Missouri Mobocrat. (persecutors of Mormons)I have been in a daze most the day. I

didn't realize it but this incident was a real tug at my testimony because I had trusted in man. So I walked home tearful and with great grief for I knew I couldn't return to the Temple. "

I prepared to pray with Mary and we both decided I would not return to working in the Temple as a maintenance worker. Then we both knelt down in the privacy of our bedroom in prayer to God.

I've had some powerful manifestations of the spirit before in my life, my mission, and with my wife but this manifestation I will never forget. It was a witness of the Holy Ghost to us that I should not take the maintenance job offered to me.

I remember kneeling with my wife in prayer. As I prayed I told the Lord that I decided to not take the position of maintenance. We felt the room fill with a warm radiance. Then our spirits were overcome so much so that we wept. We felt what seemed like the presence of a divine being in the room before us.

I was so amazed that I lifted my head to open my eyes to see this personage but I could see no one with my physical eyes. I closed my eyes and continued in rapture. We prayed and received a manifestation of the Holy Ghost that our decision was the right decision.

I asked my wife if she had felt the presence of a personage in our room as we prayed. She told me she did. "We called President Edmunds and told him my former position was not available and I wouldn't want the custodial work as it would not afford me study time. Mary and I went for a walk. Upon returning President Edmunds informed me I could have my old job back. I told him I needed a half hour to consult the Lord.. He was glad to oblige.

I thought of every particular. I thought it would be good to return to the Temple to show forgiveness and advance but as we prayed there was no further manifestation, no peace, no answer. Five times or more we knelt and prayed but still no answer. Finally I felt some peace upon the last attempt as I felt I would not return to the Temple.

I got a hold of President Edmunds at 4:00 p.m. I told him of what had occurred and I felt I should obey the first manifestation. He did not realize what a powerful witness it had been. President Edmunds said, " should I not try to pray again and not lead the spirit." He told me to think it over and call him Sunday night or Monday morning and tell him my decision. "

October 8, 1973 - "Called President Edmunds and I said no to the job. Monday - I picked up my check from Sister Solomon. She said I could not have the check until I told if I were returning and give up the parking sticker to the parking garage. I told her it was in pieces, she wanted the pieces I told her I threw them out. I told her she could have my check then she said she will mail it. I said I will pick it up in 15 minutes. So I did!.....I took an aspirin for my tension. It did not help. We went to a family home evening at our friends Wally's house. We read 10 pages of the old testament that day. Special thing: I put two posters on the ceiling Joseph Smith's house and the Hill Cumorah."

Mary and I continued to attend the Temple regularly as we were called by our Bishop to be the ward representatives responsible for getting young couples to attend the Temple. In fact my wife worked very intently beside me doing all we could in our callings.

At this time in world events Israel was fighting Egypt and Syria and finally Jordan. Vice President Agnew gave a speech to explain he was not guilty of crimes but resigned for the benefit of the nation. I had seen up to including 10 therapists to this time to deal with being gay and Mormon.

Family, Friends, and Prophets

October 16, 1973 - Tuesday - " I went and spoke to President Kimball. He informed me that he was turning over files of people he had counseled to Social Services since he was now President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. He told me my file would not be included because I had married. I told him I didn't feel any sexual enjoyment with my wife. He told me I should force myself and to stay with the program. I told President Kimball I had left the Temple work and how angry I felt toward my superiors and he counseled me to be forgiving. That I more than anyone should forgive others. "

I went to his new office which was recently decorated with the furnishings which belonged to President David O. McKay. He said I should be a Banker like he was or work as a custodian, or in a parking ramp. Start a job and really work and show them you can do it. He gave me a blessing to help me in my new job. He gave me a fifty dollar traveler's cheque and told me to pay some of my bills. Later I noticed the check had my name spelled incorrectly but I wasn't about to go screaming back so I signed it misspelled. I later paid him back after he became prophet of the church and he did not remember the loan he made to me.

I was to meet a young man in one of my next jobs who was awaiting approval to go on his mission. I felt that my former wife and I had something to do with helping him to feel worthy to go on his mission and later when our son was born we named our first born son after him.

I had many jobs in the next few years (1) Ornamental Horticultural Assistant at U.S.U extension services through the CETA program (2) Art Therapist Assistant at Granite Mental Health Center also a CETA position.

My first born son arrived in November. I was there in the delivery room. Later in the month I had many moments alone with him and I said in my journal: " My Son has been so pleasant today. I love him very much. I hope he doesn't mind me naming him after my dear friend and brother who meant so much to me. "

I loved my friend very much.

December 5, 1973 - " My little son. I took him to my wife's arms for his nursing.....I stopped at the Assembly Hall at 5:00 p.m. for an appointment with Richard P. Condie. Brother Condie told me to come back at 6:30 p.m. I went home and prayed and exercised my voice. I drove down and the two voices ahead of me sounded as though they were struggling so I felt relieved.... Brother Condie told me I had a good voice, can hear quite well. He said he would make an opening for me in his appointment schedule. He said he will call me either at work or home...." Special thing: Ice Skate card.

December 7, 1973 - "I talk to my son with care and concern. I tell him when and where I am going when I leave the house. We opened Grandma Helen's presents today and described them to my son while he nursed....I worried about my wife as she was away for three hours. I talked with Mary's mother by phone, she cried as she explained her home and relationship with her husband which was having difficulties. I gave her the best advice I could think of (1) Have a family home evening each week. (2) Prayer morning and evening and (3) Read the scriptures. Tears filled my eyes when I felt needed and also when my wife came home safely. I was worried about her. Special thing: A fern frond with the words - a thing of beauty is a joy forever."

There was a lot of time spent with my son changing diapers, shampooing his hair, giving baths, and just at play. He would awaken usually numerous times in the evening so I waltzed with him in my arms and sang to him until he fell back to sleep. I mention in my journal that I could not wait to talk, hike and spend time together with my son. I knew I was experiencing quality time with my little boy. It was much more attention than my father could give to me.

December 27, 1973 - " Thursday- We watched the tribute to Harold B. Lee the prophet, who died last night unexpectedly. Now President Kimball is the prophet of the Church. WE OWE THE PROPHET OF GOD FIFTY DOLLARS. That's a sobering thought. That seems a little humorous too! "

December 29, 1974 - "Saturday - Listened to President Lee's funeral. President Kimball compared President Lee to a Redwood tree and that It had fallen in the forest. Elder Hinckley said his death was not untimely. The Lord knew his purposes. President Romney spoke of his friendship. President Tanner cried.....I called David Hicken and David Lund to ask for our home teachers because I felt like I had pneumonia. My lung was aching. They realized that we had not been assigned home teachers for some unknown reason. So David said he would come over tonight and administer to me. David administered to me. David said in the blessing that the blessing would be a revelation for me, talked of my mission in life. He commanded by the power of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood that those parts in me which were afflicting me, to be healed..Special thing: A Christmas tree lit in our room.

David later said he and his wife would be willing to take care of our son when we go to the Temple. They seem to love my son very much. They are expecting a child. He and his wife watched my wife and I give my son a bath. They held him and fed him. "

David was a very loving person. He was a true Latter Day Saint. I wish I could have been one tenth a Christian as he was. He was not only very handsome but kind to me. I was privileged to know him. He is one of the few men in the church who I would like to see when I leave this earth.

I always felt more positive when other couples took time to be with my wife and I. I enjoyed the companionship as well as it filled any longing I had for male affection. It would be an appropriate way to receive gratification of the almost unquenchable need I had to have company with other men. That need was becoming more apparent as the years of my marriage to a women continued.

January 5, 1973 - " Saturday- David Hicken picked me up and took me to the stake farm where we shoveled manure and slug hammered cement to make room for a new fence.....David and I talked about President Kimball, spiritual experiences and things we learned on our mission....David gave me his hat because I had a cold...how I enjoyed the company of a brother. Special thing: Courier and Ives card in Mary's diary."

My wife and I continued to do service within the Church through our slide presentation of the Hill Cumorah Pageant. We would home teach together, engage in Temple visits with other young married couples and spend many hours with our new son. I continued to take lessons from Brother Condie at a high rate per hour for my finances but I had prayed several years previous and the Lord had told me I would be in the choir. So I made sacrifices to enable me to pay for the lessons.

January 25, 1974 - " Friday - Lesson with Brother Condie... Condie was in a poetic mood. He talked about sunsets and color in my voice. He spoke of getting me in the Choir before he passed out of this life. It made me feel sad. He said he expected to get me into the choir very soon. He quoted the poem Lovely As A Tree. He took my hand in departure as a Monsieur of France and bid me Adieu. I called him mon papa condie.....Special thing: pamphlets on sewing.
"

January 27, 1974 - Sunday -" Priesthood Meeting- Farewell to David Lund and David Hicken both moving their families from the ward. David Hicken apologized for failing us. I told him he did not fail me. He taught me wonderful lessons of life. One time I left the snow in the walkway because I felt resentful to my neighbors who shared the walkway so David shoveled the whole walk when he arrived to see us. "

I was struggling trying to balance my need to have men influencing my life to the other factor of taking enough time with my wife investing in what seemed to be an experiment into heterosexual family life. It was frustrating without anyone personally there who had been through this experience giving words of encouragement. I was not equipped to face this struggle alone.

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir

February 1, 1974 Friday - " Shirl (fellow worker) who is in the Tabernacle Choir mentioned that Brother Condie might retire. I asked Brother Condie if he were going to retire. He said he hoped not but would step down if the brethren asked him to. I told him I still wanted to be in the choir when he conducted. He assured me I would be in the choir sooner than I think. He counseled me about my vibrato, sing high in the nasal, and lower my chin. He calls me Mon Ami. We had a good lesson.....Special thing: Wildflowers."

During this time period we watched over our little son. On February 3, 1974 I gave him a father's blessing in church. Many people remarked how beautiful the blessing sounded. There were people in the neighborhood who seemed to flock to our house including cub scouts, a home teaching companion, and his friends. I use to take these young people to President Kimball's house and tell them I owed the prophet fifty dollars. I could imitate President Kimball's raspy voice and had a little monologue I did that made them and other of our friends laugh.

March 15, 1974 - Friday - "I went to my lesson unprepared but Brother Condie was helpful and understanding. He said he and I are like each other concerning some beliefs of the church. He too did not understand why blacks could not hold the priesthood at this time in the church. He spoke of his relationship with the General Authorities of the church; how President McKay (former Prophet of the Church) was always concerned about his welfare. He was good friends with Joseph Fielding Smith. Once he told President Harold B. Lee how he felt about the righteous blacks and hoped that they could hold the priesthood but President Lee did not answer.... "

One of my new friends another Rick was a non-member. I found myself in a delicate situation because I was very much attracted to him but I also wanted to teach him about the gospel. He implied that he loved me just a little more than what most men share but he too was married so we accepted our similar situations.

We were very close. We wrote notes to each other. One of them was very caring and I kept it through my journal. I think he got the words off a greeting card but they were very special to me.

Open my eyes to the beauty that lies beneath your eyes. Speak tenderly the feeling you long to share. And I pray that I am awake when you knock on my heart. For your love unfolds a beauty in me I've never known. "

It was written to me on March 25, 1974 and I mentioned in my diary as " I rested for a couple hours unable to put Rick from my thoughts yet wondering how I will ever be able to love appropriately an earthly friend. I long for the fellowship I must have had when I dwelt in Celestial Courts on high. "

May 26, 1974 - Sunday - "...My sister called today. She sounded discouraged. She's been attending church. I told her about Grandma and Grandpa Maynard's Temple work which I did for

them in the Idaho Falls Temple. We both were in tears. She said she plans to be baptized July 6th.....My wife and I read Prophecy Key to the Future (prophetic book on Christ's second coming)....So many temptations, loneliness, frustrations of where to work, meaning of my life, and the choir. It is all so difficult for me. I pray I will be given strength to endure and not shrink again. Special thing: little white flowers. "

May 29, 1974 - " Wednesday- ...Brother Robert Cundick, the Tabernacle organist, called me to inform me that I was accepted as a member in the Tabernacle choir and I should be there in the Tabernacle Thursday night. I couldn't believe it. I felt like I was a missionary once again.

I walked home from work and stopped in the Assembly Hall to ask Brother Condie what to wear, who to speak too! He seemed happy and assured me he would be there to help me. I asked the Bishop for a recommend (letter as well as a Temple recommend for the choir. I guess I will be going to the World's Fair in Spokane, Washington. Special thing: A Valentine for my wife. "

May 30, 1974 - " Thursday - ...I had difficulty sleeping out of excitement to be in the Tabernacle Choir. Walked home from work got the recommend from the Bishop. I showered, shaved, dressed for the rehearsal, walked down to the Tabernacle. Scott, another first tenor and I got our music, clothing, and walked in late together. People around us said," more first tenors. " We sat in the last row. I sat next to a very vivacious young blond haired man. I felt disappointed when it was all over. I walked home very invigorated. Happier than I've been in a long time. I sang Sing Unto God on the way home. Special thing: candied apples. "

I look back on that evening with amazement and gratitude. However, I was puzzled by being accepted into the choir with this particular new friend, Scott. Since we entered the choir together that made us friends from the beginning. Being my height Scott would sit next to me in the choir because tenors were seated according to height at that time. Sitting next to each other being friends to each other we eventually roomed with each other when we went on trips.

Our first trip was to the Spokane World's Fair. We were assigned to room together with another choir member but he did not show for the trip. That left us to room together unchaperoned. We needed a chaperone because as I was to find out we were both gay.

I was trying so hard to keep my eye single to the Lord and then this curve ball. In the scriptures it purports that no one will be tested beyond their ability to resist the temptation. I felt like this point was stretched to the limit in this case.

May 31, 1974 - " Friday -Brother Condie called me for an early lesson of 40 minutes. I didn't absorb all the scale and theory business. Stopped at the Temple Vu Market (recently a Mormon crafts store). The cashier asked me if I were in the Tabernacle choir: she saw my music. I felt like a television star...Special thing: Some food items for Mary from the party at work. "

June 5, 1974 - " Wednesday - ...It rained and my little son and I went walking in the rain with our umbrella. He rode in the harness backpack seatmy son wasn't tired later at night so I

rehearsed my choir music holding him till he fell asleepSpecial thing to my wife: a rose bud.
"

June 7, 1974 - "Friday -we took our son to the Temple Thursday. Sister Edmunds and Sister Ferguson fell all over him....We took our son to meet Brother Condie. My lesson was good and long. Brother Condie told us not to call our son by the baby nick name we had of Binkie Boo. Bro. Condie said that he was a prince, a handsome child. He would help his mother around the house and love his father and we would enjoy doing things with him.

Brother Condie gave him a kiss on the cheek. I've enjoyed the friendship of this well-known leader of the choir. I pray I can be in the choir at least a few years. I keep expecting the dream to be over as was the one with the Mormon Youth Symphony and Chorus. We picked up Rick, Diane and their new baby Rebecca to take them for a ride out to the Great Salt Lake and sunset. Special thing: Made the bed with a beautiful card left on the pillow."

June 9, 1974 - " Sunday - not much sleep last night - up at 6:00 a.m. Drove down to choir to make sure I wasn't late. Sat between Richard and Scott. ...President Kimball and his wife led Vice President Ford on to the rostrum. He spoke to the audience and us. President Stewart spoke too much but finally gave Vice President Ford three books by the first Presidency and some Tabernacle Choir records. We sang # 13 and # 112 Eternal Father and the Battle Hymn.... Special thing: Lots of hugs. (My wife may be pregnant again.)

I haven't mentioned one tenth of the things we did for our home teaching families, cub scouts, and neighbors. It is amazing to me we did not drop from exhaustion. I also moved from one short term job to another (mostly government ones). It seemed we were living on the edge. Financially we were just making it.

June 23, 1974 - "Sunday -.... Sat between Scott and Breck. I will room with Scott and Larry in Spokane. I felt close to Breck. Breck will room with Harold an older German man. The general authorities arriving was exciting. I had seen many of them in the Temple. I remember when President Joseph Fielding Smith put his hand on my shoulder in line in the Temple cafeteria and many more of the brethren. It was a different matter to be sitting up front on the stand behind these spiritual men....

President Kimball spoke to the Conference audience. Brother Richard P. Condie was released as director of the choir. Jay Welch was sustained as the new Tabernacle conductor. President Kimball gave a lengthy tribute to Brother Condie...Special thing: Washed the dishes, cleaned the refrigerator and the cupboards."

Ooops! I Made a Mistake

I continued to have voice lessons from Brother Condie, trying to learn all I could from his vast knowledge of the tenor voice. On July 18th 1974 I flew to Spokane Washington with the Choir. We stayed at Gonzaga University. I visited the World's Fair immediately. I went to the Book of

Mormon Pavilion. That evening the choir sang in the Coliseum, a very large cattle rodeo type building. It was so warm that we all were soaked to a sweat during the concert.

After the concert Scott and I stayed up all evening talking as our third roommate did not show for the trip. It was during that session we confessed our common homosexuality and did some light fondling. I look back on that experience with gratification at being with someone who knew exactly how I felt. I was also puzzled that in the choir I would find someone like me.

I wondered how could this vehicle of the Lord's Choir bring me to the throws of such temptation. I felt this temptation was beyond my power at the time to resist. It was so inevitable that Scott and I would get to that point it hurt me to feel so unprotected by God from my own temptation.

July 19, 1974 - Friday - " ... walked with Richard and two other members of the choir to the Fair. We went directly to the closest Pavilion, the Russian pavilion. Saw the movie " My Land " then as I was walking up a ramp I felt prompted to avoid the crowd and go another way. A young woman crossed before me and I noticed her guide badge. It read Mila. I stopped and asked her where she came from in Russia. She said she was from Moscow. I told her I was in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. She mentioned that she had attended our concert last night. We critiqued the program together. She liked the classical numbers.

She seemed like a choice spirit and I listened to her as a group of people asked her questions. I felt so warm toward her. I noticed how she spoke so practical to the crowd but more personal to me. Later she said she was a teacher in Oriental Culture. Her husband and his father both were members of the Communist Party. She said only 6% of the Russian People belong to the party.

I felt impressed to sincerely mention how happy I was to talk to her and as I left she gave me her guide pin of the biosphere design, with arm and sickle as well as U.S.S.R Expo 74. I wandered further around the pavilion. I noticed when Mila spoke with me several other guides watched her slyly, especially a severe looking couple. The man was bearded and the woman I characterize as intellectual looking. So Mila had reason to not be so personable but lecture to the people. It reminded me of the incident when Brother Hansen told me not to be so friendly to the patrons of the Temple.

As I left the pavilion I knew I had to give Mila a Book of Mormon. I tried to find the Book of Mormon Pavilion. I prayed for the Lord's help. I thought the scriptures said the weak would teach the gospel even to kings so I thought I would try. Finally I saw the Pavilion and went up to missionary at the exit. I knew it would take time to go through the pavilion so I told him my story and naturally he wanted me to get a Book of Mormon for Mila.

The missionary let me in the exit. I told those at the counter and they seemed happy as well. I paused to meditate on what I would say then I wrote on the front title page:

Mila,

It was so wonderful to talk to you in your country's pavilion. I so enjoyed the movie MY LAND. I just felt so much love for your wonderful personality. May you enjoy this book.

Love, Don Attridge

As I returned, the line to the Russian Pavilion was hundreds of yards long. Then I saw the Soviet restaurant. It was in the basement and it connected to the display area. I managed to slip in when the one way doors opened to let people out. I moved passed Russian pastries which screamed to me.

I felt that someone would try to prevent me from giving the Book of Mormon to her. I guarded that Book of Mormon like Joseph Smith must have guarded the golden plates as he took them to his home for translation. I passed another guide I recognized and thought how easy it would be to give it to her and she could pass it to Mila but the spirit said move forward.

I found Mila after crossing the path of the two stern guards. She was with another small group. She was just completing her lecture and turned to find me standing there with the Book of Mormon at my side. She smiled kindly and was very happy to see me again. I told her I had a gift for her and hoped it wouldn't put her into difficulties with her government.

I asked her if I could give her a book. She was delighted. I placed it into her hands and she read it outloud pointing with her finger, THE BOOOOOK OF MOOORMOOON. She asked " Is it a story of how your people came across the plains." I told her " It was a record of the Native American peoples who lived in America in Christ's time and his appearance to them. "

I invited her to contact me if she came to Salt Lake City to hear the Tabernacle Choir. She was very sincere and appreciated the gift very much. I told her when she returned to Moscow to speak to the authorities and leaders there to ask the Tabernacle Choir to come to Moscow. I told her to make sure to speak to me again. I told her of my love for her wonderful personality and said almost unthinkingly, GOD BLESS YOU.

As I left, I saw her with the other stern guides. She was swarmed about like a Queen Bee explaining some American boy had just given her a book. I walked out of the pavilion and wept with joy. I was so thankful that the Lord had allowed me to be an instrument of his gospel.

That night I walked to the Concert Hall with James, a black member of the choir. He was interested in having me show the Hill Cumorah Pageant slides to the Genesis group (blacks in the Church who did not hold the priesthood at that time.) He shared with me his conversion to the Gospel. "

When I returned from Spokane to Salt Lake City I was in a different space. I was more than ever a homosexual hiding behind the apron strings of heterosexuality. I would never again be the same person for I was in touch once again with my true feelings. Scott and I had opened the door to communication on a truthful level. I had someone I could be myself around.

I was also a missionary who felt like he had success teaching the Gospel. The quest continued to figure out how I could be loyal to the Lord and loyal to myself.

July 21, 1974 - Sunday _ " 7:30 a.m. rehearsal. Brother Condie started us on God Be With You Till We Meet Again, which was our usual close to the broadcast and walked off the stage as we completed the song without a director. The entire choir was weeping. He couldn't say goodbye. "

August 4, 1974 - "Sunday - Choir rehearsal. Scott was sad. I cheered him. Richard (a choir member) was real fatherly with me.....Showed Hill Cumorah Pageant Slides to the Genesis group. One black family from Louisiana is investigating the Church and said they are sure they will be baptized. I was so happy to be a little part of teaching them about the gospel. Special thing: Promised to fix the rocker. "

August 6, 1974 - "Tuesday -..... the choir had official pictures taken tonight.... photographs for our trip to Washington D.C. now that Jay Welch is our new director. We posed for two hours for the official photograph. Scott came over and met my wife and my little son. Special thing: Cleaned the bedroom.

Sometime during that summer on a warm evening Mack, my home teaching companion, Rick who wrote me poetry, and a mutual friend Leo and I all went to a spa near by called Wasatch Springs. It was a natural hot spring spa. There were private rooms with a pool that you could rent for hours. We all swam around in the nude. It was the most sensuous experience I had for a long time. Many times as we horsed around we would come in contact with each other. There was more warmth and love involved than sexuality.

Sadly enough for me Rick joined the army not long after and moved away. I never saw him again.

August 18, 1974 - "SundayDr. Avarad Fairbanks called to take us out to a chapel he used for a studio which he wants a family to live in the chapel basement. He spoke about his angel Moroni statue for the Washington Temple being free of gravity as opposed to the angel Moroni statue on the Salt Lake Temple. Special thing for my wife: Blue forget me nots. "

The Tabernacle Choir went to Washington D.C. September 13-15, 1974. We had practiced with strenuous extra rehearsals to prepare some difficult Bach numbers. We were able to go as a group through the Washington Temple before it was dedicated. We sang in the Kennedy Center before President Ford and President Kimball. President Ford and his wife came up on the podium to the choir after our performance. We sang some of their favorite hymns.

Scott and I roomed again with each other but a party next to us kept us from sleeping. Scott and I were having a lot of communication problems mixed in with our homosexual discussions. One of the other members of the choir kept knocking at our door as well wanting to talk about his

homosexuality but Scott and I wanted our privacy. I don't remember having sex with Scott that evening but I felt very close to him like a brother.

On the last day in Washington I went with James (from the Genesis group) to the Lincoln Memorial. We took pictures of each other and the monument.

October 26, 1974 - "Saturday - Brother Condie scheduled me wrong so James had to sit through my lesson. My wife, James and my son and I all walked around Temple Square. Then I sat through James lesson. James and I sang a duet. I told James we ought to sing a duet." **BLACK AND WHITE TOGETHER.**" James said the Lord will get you for that! We were chiding each other in a brotherly way. Special thing for my wife: wind chimes. "

The only one at this time in my life that knew I was gay was my wife, President Kimball and a therapist at Granite Mental Health where I was working as an assistant art therapist. My therapist friend seemed intrigued by my situation. We would spend lunch times together. While working in the center I had the domain of the ceramics room. So one of the head psychiatrists, Dr. Reiser put a sign on my room door. Psycho-Ceramics for Cracked Pots. It seemed we were all reaching out for ways to communicate to each other even in this therapeutic situation.

November 5, 1974 - "Tuesday -Talk with Bob (Robert Strachan) He affirmed my being. We drove up Emigration Canyon and ate our lunch in the tops of the mountains. We listened to classical music. I told him I was surprised at some things he had said to my wife....Bob saw Mary and I going to the Symphony (My wife and I sat in the choir seats in the Tabernacle when the Utah Symphony use to perform in the Tabernacle).

My wife's dress was very beautiful and I am glad I had her get herself a new coat which was very stylish on her! We drove downtown and parked in the church underground parking plaza.Bob later told me he saw us other times and said we were part of the beautiful people.... Special thing: Strawberries."

November 24, 1974 - " Sunday- Scott's so brazen. He asks the men in choir = do you have anything I can suck = He is asking for a throat lozenge but it makes me laugh. We taped some new words for the Battle Hymn which were not terribly sensible. Jay really insulted the author. Good riddance to these words.

I really love being in the Choir. I love to sing God Be With You Till We Meet Again. Jay starts us and we sing to the audience. Special thing: candlestick holder.

November 30, 1974 - "Saturday - ...drove to voice lesson. Brother Condie gave me the whole hour. He really has been a choice spirit. Haven't paid him for the last three weeks - no moneyBishop stopped by when I was assembling my paintings for an exhibit at Westminster College and art work for Don Doxey's class. The Bishop wants me to lead the young people's choir December 29th for Sacrament service.....Special thing: strawberry cup. "

December 15, 1974 - Sunday "...Tabernacle broadcast ..President Romney of the first Presidency announced Jay Welch resigned as director of the choir... It was a great sadness to me...All sorts of gossip and speculation....he ordered uniforms without permission... new designs that were pretty for the women?...He had musical arrangements with Richard L. Evans and the copyrights were in question...? Had run in with President Stewart whose demeanor was like an old politician?

December 29, 1974 - " Sunday -...talked with Richard (choir member) this morning he calls me Dom Delouise and I call him Clark Kent...we prepared for a German documentary to be seen by 500,000 people for the German people.....I conducted the youth chorus in my ward in I'll Begin Again, On A Beautiful Day, and Thank You Very Much from the musical Scrooge. The Bishopric seemed pleased.

I had tithing settlement with the Bishop...I feel depressed tonight knowing my love for my brother images (men).....My unhappy state at being separate and not cohesive in my home. I want to be left alone so I may be able to choose my friends and my joy. My chosen career as promised in my patriarchal blessing seems an impossibility. A means I cannot seem to accomplish for I feel so torn being a homosexual in a heterosexual lie. Sometimes I desire to honestly live before myself and others...but I have been taught such fear of the truth of my life. Special thing: A night light. "

January 5, 1975 - " Sunday - Choir practice... sat between Richard and Scott ... We filmed our last songs for the Branss documentary/Christmas music.. At the conclusion of the taping Truck Branss spoke to us through translation by his wife. We sang GOD BE WITH YOU TILL WE MEET AGAIN....Mrs. Branss cried and her husband covered his eyes with his tinted glasses. And I wept too!..Special thing: A Kiss on the Hand for my wife. "

I look at that journal entry with great sadness for I realize that was the type of affection I was able to give to her comfortably. I must have been realizing that I could not bring her happiness in this marriage. I could count on my hands the number of times we had been intimate as man and wife.

My wife was nearing the time she would have our second child. Since we had been through the experience already things seemed to be going more smoothly. While we went into the hospital February 17th 1975 it wasn't until many hours of labor later that at ten minutes after midnight that our second son was born. I was there in the delivery room. I followed him to the nursery. I stayed near while his mother was nursing him. I endeavored to treat him in every way as equal as I could to my first born son.

But I tried extra not to forget my other little son and included him and introduced him to his new brother. I consulted with therapists so that I would not cross their boundaries as mine were crossed by my parents with abandonment and sexual innuendo. If I held one son in my lap to read stories then later or at another time I did the same to the other son. Later in June I would give him a father's blessing as I did his brother. It was different but equally spiritual.

March 22, 1975 - " Saturday -this was a day of tragedy for me.....I saw David Hicken's photo in the obituary column. He had been electrocuted in an accident in Montana. I thought of his kindnesses toward us... I was depressed and wondered why such a wonderful person was taken. I will miss his thoughtful ways....I will miss his beauty and his good example. "

March 27, 1975 - "Thursday- drove to the Tabernacle for rehearsal. It was exactly 8:32 p.m. when a spiritual thought was being given to the choir by one of the sister members..... Earthquake 6.4 on the Richter scale in Idaho..... I was sitting there listening to the message. Then the sister asked us to pray. As we were praying first the entire Tabernacle started to creak and move like a small sway. I wasn't about to keep praying. I was talking to my neighbors about," Is this an earthquake, hey it's an earthquake. "No one paid attention. The large Tabernacle organ facade started swaying east to west. Then the pipes or chimes started to clang.

I guessed that these people were used to it as they all continued praying with bowed heads and gentle poses. While I was like a young man with a new horse trying to hold on. I kept looking in disbelief at the other members in the choir. They acted like nothing was happening. It was my first earthquake ever. No one within a 5 foot radius of me could continue in prayer as I stammered to them of my condition.

As the rolling subsided I went downstairs to the nearest telephone and called my wife to see if she were alright. The rehearsal went on without me, naturally. My wife didn't feel a thing so I went back to my seat and joined the song in progress like I was a contestant on name that tune!...Special thing for my wife: A special ceramic Easter Egg I had made for her. "

April 3, 1975 - Thursday - " Bob (Dr. Strachan) and I went to Temple square. We looked at the new fountain between the Temple and new visitors center. Well! Strange! were some of our comments.... Went in the Church Office Building looked at the Ascension Mural by Christiansen. We felt the Lord's spirit.. Bob thought it was the devil..but it was the Lord's ..he had never felt that strong a spirit.. I told him it was from the Lord.

We went through the parking ramp into the old Church Administration Building. Bob wanted us to go up the elevator of the Administration building. There was President Kimball shaking hands with guests. We shook his hands but President Kimball did not acknowledge me. Bob was psycho-analyzing President Kimball... Special thing: Watched the boys as my wife went to be with friends."

July 6, 1975 - Sunday - " Good broadcast with Paul Hanks. Scott started talking about his sexual life. Then they changed our seats. I was glad I got moved because I had difficulty with Scott's talking. Wondering why the Lord brought us into the choir the same night, same height, both gay. I need to surround myself by those that are spiritual which my patriarchal blessing admonishes me. Special thing: Took care of the boys so my wife could take a long soothing bath. "

The choir went to Edmonton Alberta Canada in August. I would be rooming with Breck. It would be a change from rooming with Scott. I appreciated Scott very much. He was someone I could be honest with, a friend who could understand what it was like being Mormon and gay. I believe Scott got upset with me because I was more and more living in hypocrisy. It was difficult for him to understand how I got into such a situation.

While Breck and I roomed in Edmonton we met a family in an antique store and decided to be missionaries to them. I bought some cups for my wife and large reading books for my sons. We talked to a Ukrainian man on a bench and gave out bubble gum in the name of the choir. Breck's companionship and friendship was much like being on a mission once again.

Aversion Shock Therapy

While I seemed to be succeeding in church work even in loving my children I was thrown into confusion about how to earn a living. Maybe I wanted things to be easier. I had wonderful employment positions through CETA, a government program, however they only lasted until the government grant lasted. Then I was unemployed once again.

I was referred to Utah State Rehabilitation Services. I don't want to blame President Kimball but he had told me not to work with the cub scouts, not to work in the arts (My degree was in Fine Arts) and separate myself from other homosexuals. Contrary to popular opinion there didn't seem to be anywhere in Salt Lake City or Utah that I didn't bump into a homosexual in the workplace.

At this time I was experiencing self-doubt, self-confusion and I am O.K. one day and I am not O.K. the next day. I was returning to the same threshold I experienced at B.Y.U. I thought I could change my feelings, my homosexual feeling. I was fighting inside myself every day. The vocational rehabilitation counselor administered testing (mental, vocational and technical) to see if I could qualify for further educational funds, counseling and other employment benefits offered by his offices.

Eventually through hours of counseling my homosexuality became known to him. Because Homosexuality was considered a mental illness until the American Psychiatric Association said it was not the counselor wanted to prove to his supervisors that I was truly homosexual and nothing I could do could change my behavior. In that vein I was sent by the State of Utah Rehabilitation Services, expenses paid, to Dr. Robert Card. I refer to this therapy in my journal February 4, 1976,

"Through aversion shock therapy I am trying to retrain my mind to adhere to the heterosexual principles that I am supposed to espouse."

April 3, 1976 - Saturday - " I enjoy being in the Church but feel like a foreigner within, not a fellow citizen. I think of the tests I took at Vocational Rehabilitation. I am starting to exhibit asocial behavior with outbursts of anger then crying. I am so overwhelmed with my attraction to men...."

In the processes of aversion shock therapy I would be watching pornographic movies receive a shock to my forearm and leave the offices of Dr. Card in extreme sexual distress. I believe it was at this juncture I began to feel trapped in my marriage.

The marriage lost any sense of eternalness. I think it became a sorrow for both of us. Not only did we have all the disputes that all normal marriages contain. There was a fully functioning homosexual married to a fully functioning heterosexual. What was President Kimball thinking to counsel homosexuals to marry heterosexuals? Did he truly have grasp of the situation. Did he present this before the God of Heaven and receive this answer?

The Tabernacle Choir was taking me to the American Bicentennial. These are a composite of my journal entries.

"We arrived in Philadelphia on June 28th 1976. Breck and I walked through the city to the liberty bell which I touched several times. Went through Independence Hall.

In the evening we walked over to the Academy of Music..... (oldest concert hall in the new world) Eugene Ormandy worked with the Choir and Orchestra. On June 29th we went to Robin Hood Dell to rehearse. Museum of Art all afternoon. Evening concert with the Philadelphia Philharmonic at Robin Hood Dell 20,000 people. We took the Amtrak train to Boston for a concert. It was a beautiful ride along the shore. Flew to New York City .. rehearsal in Carnegie Hall then later a good concert. A black couple in the front row who I got to know asked me to sign their program ... Amtrak to Washington D.C. July 3rd President Kimball spoke to us at the Washington Temple... Kennedy Center rehearsal O.J. Simpson, Bob Hope, Art Linkletter, Annette Funicello, and Tony Savales...."

One of the highlights of the trip occurred when the left over trumpeters from the Nixon years still used by the Ford Administration were positioned on every tier of the John Philip Sousa Hall in the Kennedy Center. Before the Tabernacle Choir concert began they played a trumpet fanfare for the arrival of President Ford and President Kimball entering the Presidential Box. I don't know what they played but I thought I was at the second Coming of the Savior.

Our last concert was in the Capitol Center July 4th where we sang to 80,000 people for the weekly broadcast. We were disappointed not to see the largest display of fireworks in the United States history but President Kimball who flew on our plane had received a bomb threat (rumor) so off we went on a 6 hour flight back to Salt Lake City.

In the weeks ahead I got involved with a ultra-conservative educational school Mount Vernon Academy. I was teaching art and some elementary courses. The work and the staffing seemed

to get me on course again to enjoy the company of the saints. I invited one of the members of the Tabernacle Choir to speak to the students. She was from East Germany and had gone through great odds to get to freedom.

The school could not pay me anything for teaching, rather needed us to volunteer. I could not do that so I took my leave. It was a further discouragement. Here is my journal entry relating that disappointment.

October 7, 1976 - " Thursday - ...I feel I've done all I can, now I meet failure at what I love best. My students in the 5th and 6th grade that I've taught I will miss greatly. Now where will I find a job. Lord you can't expect much more. I'm tired. I desire to begin again. "

Looking over my journal entries I gathered this composite summary - October 1976.

" I'm in and out of jobs. Trying to stay worthy enough to remain in the choir, love my wife and children and then once a week I go to Dr. Card. I sit in the hot seat with a mercury tube device around the shaft of my penis. Here come the porno movies. Gay/Straight doesn't matter I'm watching the men. Dr. Frankenstein is back of me registering my excitement levels. He always remarks that I am a difficult client as my levels were always up there so he jams on the electric shock. He says my wife is supposed to be there next to me so when I'm finished I can get it on with her. Maybe it was working for him. What the hell was I doing? Ever go to a Tabernacle choir rehearsal after seeing an hour's worth of pornography? Tis a puzzlement!

Well it might of worked on the sex offenders he dealt with in the prison system, for after all that might be a way out of prosecution or incarceration. There were other of his clients caught in bathrooms masturbating. Yeah They're cured. But I am not there because I do any of that behavior nor do I have to be there. I'm there to prove to the State of Utah that I am homosexual so I can be eligible for vocational rehabilitation funds. This did not make sense to me.

At my last session I showed Dr. Card my arm. It looked like a piece of hamburger. There were numerous one inch cuts in my arm. I say therapy is over. As I exhibited my arm to the vocational counselors I am eligible and I guess uncured. Maybe I've started a whole new group of people, the uncured. "

I believe to this day that something happened in that therapy which added to the rage in me which would get me in repeated trouble from that time forward in my life. What I want to say about the time I spent with this therapy and Dr. Card to me seems humorous but if printed would be in poor taste.

February 21, 1977 - " Monday- Brown Floral may not be so bad a place to work. I would have enjoyed going to the Temple with the Pitkins but I had to work or not eat. I feel much like the agnostic I was thirteen years ago this month. For not having been able to be blessed with a job to supply my family with the necessities. I'm far from feeling close to God. I regret the whole hypocrisy of my existence. I pity my children for I am a failure. I feel like I've failed them. I don't

care how up in my spirits I get I'll never forget this forsaken feeling. I wish I never met the missionaries. I regret my whole life and people make me vomit..." That was a rough day!

April 4, 1977 - "Monday - General Conference was good. Hosanna Shout Anthem (Hymn used at Temple dedications) ...I was shaking after we sangI cried during the prayer and many wept around me..." Special thing: a terrarium with a small gloxinia and a violet for my wife."

April 30, 1977 - Saturday - " ...work at Brown Floral. Trying to set up a meeting with my wife's brother who is gay..don't know if he will be able to come around .. must try to open his mind to the pitfalls of gay life. Just who do I think I am, the cured? "

It seems in 1977, I who had the most to overcome had the most advice. Often I found that many times men who are homophobic have some phase of homosexuality to work through.

May 26, 1977 - Thursday -".....Choir rehearsal.. Breck and I visited.... he said he was me. I was he. Then he said he could kill me and end all his problems..." Ah sweet mysteries of life!

Liberty Park

June 14, 1977 -" Tuesday - ... I do have a testimony of the Gospel but I am a homosexual. Am I to get through this life? Excommunication hovers over me, infidelity, disease, disgrace and yet I am a father, a husband..... my wife said she wanted to remain married, appreciates me....has adjusted to the platonic relationship. Have I used them, my family. I love them as well. The Lord has forsaken me. I am very confused in the position the Church has placed me. Special thing : a small Christmas tree plant. "

I was enjoying my employment at Brown Floral. I did display work but mostly made terrariums, dish gardens and bonsai. It was there I met several homosexual employees. It was fun to kind of compare notes on likes and dislikes. The owners son was a Bishop and his wife was on the General Board of the Young Women's Organization. She had a girlfriend and we got along very well. I was preparing an article for the Chronicle to voice my feelings rather anonymously on my situation. They were very interested because they were lovers unknown to their spouses.

I have had journals of my experiences going back to when I was baptized into the Mormon Church. I was counseled by President Kimball to keep a journal. Most of my journals were available and out in the open. Now that I was deciding to " come out " I started a red journal which I kept locked up so that I would not hurt my wife any more than the situation forced me to. The red journal:

July 1977 - " somewhere in the billions or more years of my spiritual existence I gained this body of mine (1943). I was normal physically in every way one person could desire. I was not blind, I was not deaf, I could walk, and taste

I do not know if I was gay before the earth was or whether I gained some mutation of genes or had some bad experiences with mother or father or sister or brother figures but I knew I was different.....

....Somehow I got rejected by a college fraternal organization and after that, a serious bout with atheism then I joined this positive male oriented, anthropomorphic believing religious group. I was loved into this Church in a platonic back slapping way but then it soon appeared acceptance of my true self was not possible in this or any other conservative Christian oriented religion. "

This is how I opened the door of the true self that had been brooding for years in a important but out of grasp marriage, I guess a fantasy as my wife would tell me. The wonderful product of which were very energetic children. My wife and I knew before marriage that I was homosexual but maybe we both weren't listening, companionship compelled the jump...I did love my wife even if I have been a thorn to her. I wished that I could save the marriage but all the love I felt I gave to my wife was lost with the reality that I was a gay husband and father.

First I started talking to obviously gay people but decided that the bar, a bathhouse or a kegger was not my way. One evening I decided I needed someone to talk too. So I went to Liberty Park to an area where gay people met. I parked my car and stood by a lake where people were moving over the water in paddle boats. As I walked toward the gay area I saw a man sitting in his car. He gave me a look and I lingered as long as I had nerve too.

From that point on I met one person after another trying to find out what being gay was all about now that I had been away from it for many years. I was going nowhere. What I was learning is that sex is not the key that opens a relationship, it is the gift that rewards the relationship. Unfortunately I did not know how to have a relationship. I was having dessert before dinner. Perhaps that is all that society and the Church had taught me about being gay.

Then one afternoon I drove into the gas station near our apartment and home in East Millcreek. There stood before me a blonde blue eyed very handsome young man. He was a bodybuilder working at the gas station. I could not control myself and told him he should be a model and that he was very handsome. He wanted me to get a membership in a gym so we could lift weights together. Well I was an athletic misfit. I had a husky body but it was from physical labors I did over the years not pumping iron. My blonde, gas station attendant became my new best friend.

I was still in the Tabernacle Choir. One of the other male friends whom I met at Liberty Park took me out for dinner with some of his friends after the weekly Tabernacle choir rehearsal. Wouldn't you know it there was another choir member at the restaurant looking at me with these friends, one of whom was smoking. I was very paranoid and felt extremely on the spot. Then I joined these gay friends and we went to Radio City Lounge the gay bar on State Street. We walked in the back entrance to avoid being seen by people as it was just blocks from Temple Square.

I looked to my side and there was my brother-in-law. After we all got into the bar I sat at the bar with my brother-in-law and tried to explain to him why I was there. I told him I was coming out again and getting in touch with being gay. He was there with his lover whom he kept for most of his life.

My talk with my brother-in-law was about not informing his parents, my in-laws, of my appearance in the bar or my being gay. I was sorry to be a hypocrite but I loved the choir and Church and I wanted some control in how I would eventually leave them both.

My wife was constantly trying to understand my feelings. I wrote in my journal that she was quite justifiably jealous and felt rejected. I shared with her some gay Mormon underground writings called The Prologue. It was written by someone who was living near the Brigham Young University campus. I made a sketch for the person I supposed was the author to be used as the front and rear cover. It was a sketch of the Brigham Young University campus including the Provo Temple.

(Prologue Cover Insert)

After she read it she made me feel as though she could understand my feelings of being gay. She seemed also more resolved to facing a time when we would separate.

My new blond body builder friend, Brad and I had our first date during this time of great transition. He picked me up from my home. He had previously gotten to know my wife and my children. He was a friend to me but I was infatuated with him. We went to the Sizzler. He treated me like his boyfriend. Seating me. Getting me anything the waiter forgot. I was in heaven. He was my ideal. He was my prince. He made up for all the difficult times I was having deciding my future with the Church and being in the Tabernacle Choir.

I finally had to make a decision where my life was going. It was very emotional at home the morning I went to my last choir rehearsal. I was very sorrowful. The choir was like my lover. I wrote my resignation letter and played a song from the album I had help to record, Till We Meet Again. " Smile a while you kiss me sad adieu. When the clouds go by I'll come to you. Then the sky will seem more blue, down in lovers lane with you. Wedding bells will ring so merrily. Every tear will be a memory. So wait and pray each night for me : Till We meet again." These lyrics to the song were expressing my profound sorrow, my deepest grief leaving the Choir.

Both my wife and I were crying bitter tears as I think we both sensed that the marriage too was over. The song's lyrics were a fantasy of heterosexuality which to me was unattainable.

July 1977 "Today I resigned from the choir and my sorrow is many fold for my family, for my loss of the choir and for myself. I could not be myself and be a member of the choir.... why am I married. I am a homosexual. I'm not heterosexual in the slightest. I got married to be obedient to the Lord but I am needing love, infatuation, pleasure in my life so I have broken my agreement

with deity.... I could have stayed in the choir but was afraid of excommunication now or disgracing the choir. "

August 2, 1977

The Salt Lake Mormon Tabernacle Choir
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

Dear Brother Attridge,

This will acknowledge your request to be released from your mission call to membership in the Tabernacle Choir.

Your request is granted and we extend to you our sincere appreciation for your past service in furthering the work of the Lord through the missionary activities of the Tabernacle Choir.

Sincerely yours,

Oakley S. Evans, President
Jerold D. Ottley, Director

I cannot relate my emotions from that period. One of my therapists would later state she did not know how I survived through that time in my life.

I tried to cover up my depression with involvement with Brad. I see in my journal that one day He and I went for an all-day outdoors hike. We drove to Little Cottonwood Canyon. We hiked deer trails to a beautiful lake in the tops of the mountains. I swam in the nude. I wore his tee shirt as we hiked to smell his odor on me. On the trails we would stop and he would act like a little boy asking me questions, like I was his older brother. We sat by each other and talked.

We ate near a lake and laid down on a large rock. It seemed to be built for us. He put his feet by my head. My feet were by his head. I talked about the Temple, his Hercules obsession, and my home life. We became closer. Sometimes yelling and arguing and teasing each other. My greatest excitement was to act hurt and have him be attentive to me. We both knew it was a game. It was fun to play. It was like a courtship interaction for me.

On our way home he told me he didn't have any friends and I told him I didn't either, other than my wife. We needed each other. I remembered once as he ate he had some food crumbs on his face. I brushed them off and knew there was a trust there. We talked about his exposure to gay men but I didn't want to talk too much about that. I didn't want anything to put off our friendship.

We listened to the Moody Blues on the way home. I wanted to hear a song by Crosby, Stills and Nash and he played it for me after trying to convince me about the superiority of the Moody

Blues. I was still wearing his tee shirt and kept it so I could smell his aroma long after we parted realizing I was becoming a little obsessed.

Brad surprised me one day while I was at work at Brown Floral. In he walked right to my work area to spend some time with me. Bob, who was a gay married fellow employee came up to me and wanted to know everything about him. He too had taken Dr. Card's Aversion shock Therapy and reported that he was cured. I entered in my red journal "some shock therapy...what a lie! He called me at my home like a crazed animal. He has been through the Card therapy and it obviously didn't work.

August 24, 1977 Wednesday- "I was close to my children today. I am not just a gay man but a loving father and I was a caring companion to my wife ...I walked around Temple Square today.. visited the Tabernacle first time since leaving the Choir. I felt a new confidence in myself. The suppression of one kind is over, the building has begun...for this cause I give my life. LET ME LIVE has been my cry for a long time. Now I am L.M.L. Special thing: flowers. "

From the many outings to the canyons I made with with Brad, I wrote him some poems: The energy expressed was directed at forming a relationship with him.

Beneath The Trees

Beneath the trees a sun leafed covering.

Where shadows and bright stained glass greenery,

Wave to the grove like stillness.

Penetrated only by the sound of white foam bubbles

Bursting on the tops of submerged rocks.

The sun glides a sheet of water over cold stones,

Stones that hide beneath the glimmering strand,

Motionless as the colored leaves caught on mossy

Logs so tucked along the shore, Like a captured section

Of Eternity On this millionth cascading wanderer.

The Battle Cry

October 9, 1977 - " My wife and I can't stay apart but how can we stay together. I need to put spiritual things back into my life but with honesty, not deception as the Church leaders seemed to have needed to receive from me. I wish I could be what Heavenly Father wants me to be. I am so different from his plan."

November 5, 1977 - " President Kimball made a statement about Anita Bryant, supporting her actions against gays. He said that gays should not be teachers, lawyers, doctors, nurses etc. Where are we to go? Kill ourselves? It made me feel cut off from the Church completely. My Lord must have need of me. I am so confused that I no longer understand the Mormon God. So what is there for me. My sorrow is full. "

December 13, 1977 -" I have been attending a group meeting at the University of Utah. It is a gay consciousness raising group. I realize that divorce is eminent. I cannot initiate it. I decorated Brad's family's Christmas tree with designs I had learned at Brown Floral. We went up Millcreek Canyon. He slept with the car seat down and I caressed him. He said we are just friends so I stopped."

It was at that time in my life that I needed to have finalization with the past. This included my relationship with President Kimball.

December 30, 1977 -" I called President Kimball's office. I spoke to his secretary, Brother Haycock. He had told me to call Friday for an appointment with President Kimball but it never happened though I fasted for two days. He instructed me that I am to repay the \$ 50.00 to him (Haycock) so as to not disturb President Kimball. I called C. Kent Petersen head of Church Social Services and asked him about the Church program for gays. It sounds like: forget you're gay. Be spiritual. He was vague about the telestial Kingdom, whether to tell wives and husbands about being their homosexual partner. And talk to someone cured. Oh! "

January 9, 1978 - Monday- "Visited President Kimball's home tonight. Found his security guard was a friend from an old ward I attended. He was also someone I saw in the Radio City Lounge, Salt Lake City's infamous gay bar on numerous occasions.

I took my friend and roommate Jim who was a local community radio personality. President Kimball did not seem to remember the \$50.00 I owed to him but he took it after I convinced him that I was telling him the truth. After all I didn't want to end up owing a prophet of God, \$ 50.00. Jim was very impressed with being in President Kimball's home. The security guard let me in because he knew I was at least honest and meant no harm to the President. And after all I was this security guards home teacher once! "

It was at this visit to the Kimball home on Laird Drive that it looked like a trophy hall. There were Maori wall hangings, Native American rugs and other accumulated gifts from around the world draped haphazardly throughout the rooms of the home. At last I had accomplished my mission to repay the President. It would be my last face to face encounter with him before he died.

January 25, 1978 - Wednesday - " Interview with C. Kent Petersen, Head of Church Social Services. Many of President Kimball's clients were referred to Social Services when he became the prophet of the Church. I trusted that this man would give me advice which could update me. He would treat me with dignity and great sensitivity on the matter of being gay. I felt that he was an extension of what President Kimball would say to me. "

Even then I was willing to hear any reasonable voice to help me understand my life with the Church which seemed to be ending without reasonable avenues for my participation in the Church.

"Brother Petersen told me that the homosexual would have to live in the Telestial Kingdom (the lowest degree of glory offered the resurrected) with murderers, whores and liars. I told him I did not associate with these kinds of people here on the earth. I was shocked to think that he could pronounce where I would be living for eternity. I had always thought only the Lord knew this vital statistic.

He told me that we form a picture of our Father in Heaven from how our earthly fathers have treated us. My father was completely absent from my life. My father gave me next to no encouragement, support or love. This was not as I pictured my Heavenly Father.

I told him about all the spiritual experiences I had in the fourteen years I had been a member of the Church. He told me that most of the members of the church hadn't had a portion of these kind of witnesses. He told me that people like me who were homosexual did not have the gift of the holy ghost or spiritual experiences. He looked me in the eye telling me my spiritual occurrences were not of God but of Satan. I was deeply shocked by his words for these spiritual experiences had made me know that the Church was Christ's true Church restored to the Gospel.

I related the Church news article which implied people were lenient to homosexuals in our time. I told him this only encouraged the lawless to murder homosexuals as they did in Liberty Park in Salt Lake City. He seemed to not be moved.

I was overwhelmed with my emotions. I wept. I sobbed. I doubted. I hated. I rejected. I determined to state my convictions for the rest of my life.

I didn't expect the Church to say that homosexuality is right or acceptable but resented being given die messages and the closed door. "

I was determined from that moment on that I would not allow any other person on earth to demean my life. I decided to tell my truth to whoever would listen until someone in the Church would listen.

January 31, 1978 - "My article entitled Mormon and Gay - One man's tale of Bloody Knuckles, appeared on the front page of the Daily Utah Chronicle, the University of Utah student newspaper. " I thought if I could just bring my experiences out into the open

everyone involved would see things from a different perspective.

Mormon and Gay

...One man's tale of bloody knuckles'

edited by Jeff Howrey, associate editor

Utah Chronicle

"To those who say that (homosexuality) is incurable, I respond: How can you say the door cannot be opened until your knuckles are bloody, till your head is bruised, till your muscles are sore? It can be done. "Mormon Church President Spencer Kimball

It has been a tough life of "bloody knuckles " for L.M.L.

His years of agonized vigilance waiting for " the door " to open have been in vain. Instead, his lonely wait has resulted only in the realization that there will never be a place for him within the Church he loves.

L.M.L.'s story is a personal one. So much so, in fact, that it would be unfair - perhaps even impossible - to try to tell it for him. Thus, in the following letter addressed to his " Brothers and Sisters, " L.M.L. relates his own tale in his own words.

L.M.L.'s story is also a very emotional experience, passions undoubtedly color one's recollection and interpretations of events. In fairness to those who play a part in his story - particularly Mormon Church officials- it probably merits mentioning that their interpretations of the events L.M.L. relates would probably not completely correspond with his. But as far as the events themselves are concerned, the Chronicle has yet to be presented with any evidence that they did not occur as he relates them...

Editor's note: The letter written by the young male homosexual " L.M.L." which is the focus of the story on this page was referred to The Chronicle Associate Editor Jeff Howrey by a friend who is an employee of a local radio station. That station refused to broadcast the letter because, according to the employee," Our owner is very L.D.S. and wouldn't let it on the air...for fear of the controversy sure to follow."

We subsequently discovered that that radio station was not the only local media outlet which had shied away from using the letter. As it turned out, " L.M.L. " had approached almost every newspaper in the state, including the Deseret News, Salt Lake Tribune, Provo Herald, Ogden Standard-Examiner and the Daily Universe, (the Brigham Young University daily student newspaper.).

But none would print it.

And that, in light of the letter's undeniable relevance to the social and cultural climate of this state, perplexes us at the Chronicle.

While it is impossible, of course, to speculate confidently as to the reasons the papers cited above had for not printing the young man's story, we can only hope that the motive was not the same as that of the radio station's owner. Because "fear of controversy" by itself can never serve as an acceptable reason for restraining information or ideas from entering the free-flowing stream of news which the press supposedly provides for this country.

Dear Brother and Sisters:

I have been counseled to knock at the door leading out of homosexuality until my knuckles are bloody. I have had 10 years of intermittent psychotherapy, aversion shock therapy, fasting, praying, marriage, fatherhood, spiritual experiences, extreme activity in the Mormon Church and in its Temple.

I now wash the blood from my hands, anoint them, wrap them, and wait for them to heal. As soon as the scars have receded, my hands will once again be whole from the palsied, masochistic beating I gave them at the Master's door.

I retreat from my self-destruction. Knocking quietly now, I pray he who has ears, let him hear.

This account centers on events which happened a decade ago while I was a student at Brigham Young University (B.Y.U.) and the vicious act I committed against my fellow men. My soul begs forgiveness for that act...

But first I should probably tell you a bit about my life before B.Y.U. (the editor wrote this line only)

Conversion to the Church was like a ray of light to me. Fatherless as an infant and as a young man, burdened by my mother's intimacy, the abounding light of conversion soon dimmed as I came to understand that my homosexuality was diametrically opposed to The Plan.

But somehow God tolerated my condition as He led me through a full time Mormon mission during which we converted several dozen souls to His Church.

I loved the feeling of being useful to the missionary effort of the Church--I thought of myself as a talented human being who, incidentally, had a sexual preference for men.

While on my mission I confided to a few others that I was gay. Consequently, upon completion of my mission, I was instructed to meet with Church President Kimball.

At our meeting, he let me tell my whole story and then told me that I was too good for that kind of behavior and added that I didn't look like a homosexual.

He then gave me an intimate, beautiful, loving blessing and counseled me not to be taught by Satan and become in his power of force.

I wept.

Not tears of joy but sorrow because no one understood my situation. And despite all of President Kimball's good intentions and help, I was attracted to men, not women, and I knew I would have to force myself to live a heterosexual life.

I did not look forward to the life of hypocrisy which it seemed the role would demand of me.

Shortly thereafter I entered B.Y.U. and made gay acquaintances who subsequently made me aware of the paranoia homosexuals at that institution were by necessity forced to live with.

I desperately needed friends, but the gays there were so afraid and paranoid that establishing friendships proved to be virtually impossible.

As a result, I was more alone than ever... I felt as though I would be forced to remain alone for the rest of my earth life--unfeeling, unsharing, and with no one to share the intimacy of life.

Shortly thereafter I had a sexual experience with a 19 year old student who was mutually attracted to me. But he subsequently felt compelled to speak to his Bishop about it and I was soon expelled from B.Y.U. and then I was asked to officially withdraw, but not before my Bishop examined me as some sort of curious specimen and President Kimball met with me and pleaded for the names of other homosexuals I knew of at B.Y.U. so he could help them.

The kind of help I assumed he meant was some sort of apostolic counseling, perhaps therapy for the whole group of us so we could get to the truth of the matter and maybe I could even come to understand my burden in life.

But when I supplied the list of names, no such help came.

No counseling resulted.

No Bishops' concern.

Nothing.

Nothing, that is, except the hell that broke loose in the lives of those I had revealed. Hell such as excommunications, degrees denied, careers interrupted or even ruined, and lives ended.

Conspicuously, I was not excommunicated.

Ironically, one other thing that happened after I gave President Kimball the list of names was that he loaned me \$ 30.00 to help ease the financial burden of being out of school and out of work.

Soon, thereafter, the most severe period of mental depression I've ever known engulfed me.

As I walked the wet, slushy streets of Salt Lake City with no place to sleep or eat, I realized that the Church was giving me the decree of punishment Moses uttered: death.

I did not sleep.

I still do not sleep because of my agony over the lives of those former B.Y.U. students I selfishly interrupted. I wonder if they have forgiven me. And I still live in the paranoia of their possible retaliation....

Years passed, I married, fathered children and as President Kimball had counseled me to, I became extremely active in the Church program of " too busy to sin. " During these years I have had many spiritual experiences in the Temple and in my private chambers yet I have never been convinced to not be who I am...

I love my wife but I am not her lover... I need my family, we depend on each other, and my children need me. I am a good father, but I need to love and be loved both biologically and emotionally in the way my heart and hormones lead me.

I have never felt conscious desire for women, yet out of love and respect I gave. I can force this no longer. I wish that I could sit down within the bounds of the Church and talk with other gay members of my ward without fearing excommunication... I wish the Brethren would call a solemn assembly for us, an assembly so intense and spiritual that we would come to know what the Lord meant to our lives... I believe such a solemn assembly could be kept within the bounds of propriety and perhaps because of it a few lives could be save.

Who in the Church can I trust now?

Who can I talk to without fear of spiritual annihilation?

The punishment I would receive for being honest would undoubtedly be excommunication. If salvation and exaltation are so important to the Lord's Church, why doesn't the Church open a door to us...instead of slapping our bloody knuckles?

I have no choice now.

I am forced to live in hypocrisy.

I do not fit into the Plan-- I am lost for eternity to live with murderers in the telestial kingdom.

However, I am not prompted to self-destruction, but to build on my own from what is left in this world. I will raise my children with understanding and communication and treat my wife with honesty and care.

I want to become all that I am capable of becoming despite the discomfort to Zion.

This life is certainly no Shangri-La, but I do have certain peace now with the spirit inside this body of mine which I've never known before.

I want to walk with dignity, the kind of dignity I was born with...the right of any human being to live.

--L.M.L. (Let Me Live)

I have found having dealt with the press and been in several documentaries that I have been misrepresented or even misquoted. Now some decades later I will bother to correct some misconceptions which for various reasons I am sure had logic as a source but were erroneously set to print.

It is true I gave my letter to Jeff Howrey of the Chronicle staff. That's all. Perhaps my roommate at the time, the local radio employee circulated it after I gave it to Jeff but I never took it to any newspapers or news broadcasters. Perhaps this was the only way they could get the university paper to print such an article back in the 70's.

People at that time could not believe that I was telling the truth so they tried to discredit the article as being bogus. Some accused the editor of trying to tabloid for his own status or writing the article himself. They used the idea that President Kimball was not President in the 60's. My use of the title was in connection with his position in the Church as of the date I wrote the article though formerly in the 60's he was an apostle.

There arose such a furor that one of the people on the list of the B.Y.U. students who were turned in by me wrote his own letter which was printed a few days after my article appeared. I include it as documentation of what I said as being truthful. It is further evidence that these students did experience the upheaval about which I have written.

Other Casualties

The Daily Utah Chronicle, Tuesday, February 7, 1978

A Guest Opinion

The Misery and suffering of homosexuals at B.Y.U.

As I sit down to write this letter, I am filled with mixed emotions. The front page article of the Chronicle dated January 31, 1978, affected me so personally that I feel I must write this letter.

It will do little good published and yet even if published anonymous letters are not usually treated as seriously, or given the same respect, consideration or authority as those bearing the author's name. But is it worth the risk of probable negative effect on family, friends or career to sign my name to what I am about to write?

In response to editorial comments preceding the letter written by the man signing himself L.M.L. and published under the banner "Mormon and Gay" ... I can only say I have no question as to the authenticity of events related in that letter. Sufficient information is presented in that letter to leave little doubt that I was one of those whose lives were affected by L.M.L.'s actions.

A decade ago, during the school year 1967-68 I was a senior at Brigham Young University (B.Y.U.) After successfully completing a Mormon mission, I had returned to B.Y.U. and had completed my sophomore and junior years

My Mormon upbringing had filled me with aversion, remorse, and guilt when it became impossible to avoid recognizing my homosexuality. I had continued at B.Y.U. to live with the knowledge that it would not be desirable or acceptable if the truth were known. And yet wouldn't repentance and a solution to my problem be more difficult on other campuses of the latter 60's with agnostic and atheistic professors and students, student riots, hippies, free love and drugs? Under such conditions would I be able to find a solution or the incentive to overcome my problem?

L.M.L. writes of "... the paranoia homosexuals at that institution were by necessity forced to live with."

B.Y.U. students were instructed that it was their duty and obligation to inform on any fellow student known or even suspected of not conforming to university standards.

Then there were those students assigned by Standards or Housing to inspect the living quarters of other students, even those who lived off campus unless they lived with their families, and report any evidence of non-conformity to standards. Whether or not a spy ring actually existed on campus, there was little reason to be convinced that it didn't.

Being gay at B.Y.U. was like being in the CIA or the Communist Party (depending on your point of view). Even before one gay student would introduce two gay friends (as gay) without revealing names, he had to give each friend sufficient information about the other to enable the friend to satisfy himself that the other could be trusted and that he could give his permission to

be introduced as being gay. In case of parties or get-togethers, the precautions were even more complex. One had to be certain that a new friend was not an informer or a plant.

During the school year of 1967-68, given the proper clearance, I was eventually invited to a few parties. Sometimes we played party games, Battleship or the like, but mostly talked. We discussed our school activities, and aspirations. And of course there was the ever present, ever oppressive question, "What do we do about our Homosexuality?" If we can change, individually or collectively, how do we live with our homosexuality in the Church most of us loved?

Those who had sought professional or ecclesiastical counseling reported that no matter how well intentioned, those consulted were so unknowledgeable, and so unappreciative of the real feelings and problems of the homosexual that little was accomplished and it had been a waste of time.

Then came the night of that infamous party. I was casually introduced to someone I did not remember having ever met before. We seemed to have little in common and, as I remember, talked little. Some days later the host asked if I remembered this individual from the party. I was told that someone had turned him in and that he, in turn, had provided a list of names, naming everyone he knew or had met.

What happened in the weeks that followed came to be called by those involved as the Witch Hunts of 1968. One by one students were called into Standards. One by one students reported their experiences. (One thing the efforts of B.Y.U. accomplished was a breakdown of the previous reticence on the part of gay students to be known by other gays. We had to hang together or hang separately.)

It was always the same. The initial approach was the expression of a desire to help. Conditions for remaining at B.Y.U. were their supplying of additional names and the approval of President Kimball (then Elder Kimball.) The request for names was so that all of those with the same problem could be helped.

If the student cooperated and supplied a list of names his trip to standards was relatively painless; if not, interrogation procedures were put into effect, threats of immediate expulsion or worse, being confined in a room alone (solitary) to think about it, a barrage of insistent questions, sometimes from more than one source and the like.

Some reported that even after being detained for hours they had still refused to supply additional names only to later seem to disappear from campus, apparently forced to leave so suddenly that friends did not know when they had left or where they had gone.

Others reported that to make their visits as brief as possible they had supplied fictitious names or the names of only those they knew had already been reported. Apparently, however, some supplied additional names as the number of those called into Standards steadily grew.

L.M.L. writes of "...the hell broke loose in the lives of those I had revealed. Hell such as excommunications, degrees denied, careers interrupted or even ruined, and, perhaps, lives ended. "

This I can verify. Those I knew who were involved were not hippies or the less desirables (except for their homosexuality). These were for the most part Mormon elders very active in their wards. Some had received recognition for the participation in student affairs.

A significant number maintained B averages or better through three years of college. There was the ROTC officer who faced not only expulsion but the loss of his commission and career as well as the scholarship which enabled him to go to school at all.

There were college seniors who had been promised good positions as management trainees or junior executives upon graduation but who would now have to give up such dreams. Even if one were allowed to graduate what hope did one have when his official school records, open to prospective employers, labeled him as a homosexual?

In addition to the personal lives of the students there were also the families to consider. Some were the sons of prominent civic or church leaders in their respective communities and some were even related to a General Authority as I was.

Feelings and emotions were especially high since it was reported that our friend had confided in another that he had been promised that if he would supply a list of names he would be allowed to remain in school at least until the end of the term with no difficulties presented if he then wished to transfer to another university or college. If he failed to supply names he would be expelled immediately with a good chance that this would be the end of his college career.

Who could feel good about a traitor who would sell out his friends just to save his own skin?

There is more I could write, much more, of difficulties encountered in obtaining employment, of the fact that although I was not expelled but chose to leave school at the end of the term without seeing Elder Kimball or attempting to obtain his approval for further studies, B.Y.U. still coded my records so that I could not obtain an official transcript to go to school elsewhere because of a problem with Standards which had not been cleared.

In fairness, some months later I discovered that this had been cleared and I could obtain a transcript. B.Y.U. did not notify me of this fact, however, and it was only by accident that I found out. I could write of my personal experiences in seeing no evidence of any desire to help but only to rid the campus of undesirables.

But why? Why should I relate the misery and suffering I have both seen and experienced as a result of attitudes such as those expressed by President Kimball and the Mormon Church? My reason for writing this letter was twofold, to say, yes, it did (and I suppose does) happen at

B.Y.U., that what L.M.L. relates is based on what I know to be fact, and to say to L.M.L. if you are who I have every reason to believe you are, it was all so long ago.

I do not know that I can totally forgive and forget. The publication of your letter brought back too many painful memories. Still, I cannot hold you personally responsible. I can only denounce and decry those conditions and circumstances which did and do make such things possible. This is one former B.Y.U. student, at least, from whom you need have no fear of retaliation.

---Name withheld

It may have been so long ago to this fellow student but to the one who turned in the list as I chose to do it would become nightmares and daydreams of despair for years to come. It is with great relief that I see these two historic letters in print. To verify the truthfulness of them with my name finally assigned to the January 31, 1978 letter which I wrote further substantiates what occurred. It has bothered me over these years to think that my letter to the editor was charged as being bogus at the time of its printing. Now there is a real author and a second witness to what occurred at B.Y.U.

Again to clarify any minor misconceptions in the B.Y.U. episode, I was never promised a thing for my list of names. I was expelled from the University immediately. I was without my scholastic support and save for 30.00 dollars loaned me by President Kimball (then Elder and Apostle Kimball) I was destitute. As I walked the streets of Salt Lake looking for lodging and employment I believed I had been cursed by God.

I have mentioned I decided to return to my roommates apartment and through their acknowledged support of my situation I stayed off campus with them, working in yard work to support myself until the close of the Spring term.

There were times that I needed friendship, support, and a listening ear. Most of the time I got laughter, indifference and chiding from these fellow gay students who were for all practical purposes perusing an education not giving me therapy. Perhaps this person " name withheld " left the party early or forgot the situation. Let me stress that these were very nice people who in their paranoia perhaps had also become bitter and desperate due to so much hypocrisy and subterfuge.

It appeared at the time (1978) that I became obsessed with the need to tell anyone who would listen what had happened to me. To me in the telling of the occurrences seemed my redemption, my healing.

June 5, 1978 - "Interview by K.Q.E.D. Andrew Welch, John Rose the artist. Told about the experiences I had in the Church involving my homosexuality. I was in the shadows so that my face did not show and my full name was not used. The program will be seen primarily by a California audience in the Los Angeles area, I believe."

June 27, 1978 Tuesday - " Monumental day - Bishop Matheson (the acting Bishop of the ward to which I belonged) summoned me to his office to question me concerning my being a gay rights activist. Seems Bob, who is gay, married, fellow worker at Brown Floral, cruiser of Liberty Park, had not only complained to my employer (leading to my early firing) but to his Bishop. He divulged that I had written gay related articles for the newspapers the same way I had turned in names at B.Y.U.

When Bishop Matheson asked me if I were a gay activist. I asked him if he had ever talked to a gay person before in his office in the Bishopric. He said No. I said within myself, oh yes you have. The interview changed from that moment on. I would not really deal with this man. Bishop or not!

He asked me if I believed that President Kimball was a prophet. I said he should be. Then he asked me if I believed in God. I said I don't know now that it has come to this point in my life. (When I become overwhelmed in life I sometimes forget the spiritual things which have been witnessed to me. In this case I was overwhelmed.) He told me that it was reported that I was a gay activist. I told him I was not a gay activist.

Wouldn't that mean I would be marching in the streets? I wasn't doing that! Wouldn't that mean I would be reviling the Church? I didn't feel that. Then I asked the Bishop if I would be excommunicated could it be done quietly pointing to the trauma it may entail to my wife, children, and her family."

That is all I put in my journal that day. I cannot even remember how the meeting ended. At that point I did not care. I felt as though I was in the theater of the absurd. Good men interrogating other good men to find their weakness or what separated them as people or as human beings. It all seemed so absurd. I could not stand it another moment.

I have often reflected upon that day wondering if the early Apostles Peter, James, and John would have asked me to inform on fellow gays and lesbians? Would they have me expelled from religious education in their former day Universities? Could they have thought they were doing good firing me from my employment? Would I follow their advice lying about my homosexuality with my eternal companion? Would they force me to marry, raise a family and endure sexual intimacy with someone whom I loved only platonically?

July 18, 1978 - Tuesday-" Somehow my mother got the information that I had returned to gay lifestyle, to get divorced and leave the Church. My mother wrote in anger, fear and disappointment that she would cut off my penis if I came back to visit her. I realized that though she was angry and misguided now I wondered what really went on between her and me when I was a little child. After I read her letter I resealed it so it looked like I never opened it and sent it back: return to sender. "

I didn't realize it at the time but this was one more cold breeze in the whirlwind building a storm within me to take a stand.

July 26, 1978 - Wednesday-" Channel 5 news interviewed me in the children's playroom on the pediatric ward concerning my employment with terminally ill children at the University of Utah Medical Center. The children were very special and were enjoying themselves while the interview took place. I was very proud of my professionalism in this most rewarding occupation for me as children's play coordinator. "

While I sought the press to testify of all the negative things which occurred to me being a member of the Church and being Gay this one afternoon I was honored for my career successes which seemed to calm my perplexity.

October 3, 1978 - Tuesday -" Talked to Boyd K. Packard today on the telephone. He was the only general authority available. He did not want to speak to me in person but referred me to C. Kent Petersen. Brother Packard said he got too confused on the issues (Homosexuality). This implied to me that the answers seemed too contradictory. "

I remembered a conference talk of Apostle Packard where he likened the Restored gospel of Jesus Christ to a piano key board. He reported that some other faiths were pounding just one note but that the restored Gospel was the full keyboard playing every single note in a beautiful musical piece. Elder Packard on another occasion accused the homosexual of being selfish.

President Kimball often spoke of the sins of omission. If the leaders of the Church did not understand the issues before I am certain as they fall next in line to be prophet of the Church such understanding will be made known unto them as they seek beyond the thoughts of men and listen to the still small voice of the Lord. We are throughout the Church and in the privacy of our imposed exile quietly playing the gospels beautiful music. Will you listen?

From the leaders and members of the Church I heard the note of condemnation being pounded. It sounded from the pulpits from those who seem to know little of the situation. It echoed in the membership throughout the state from those who would fear gay or lesbian teachers, healthcare workers or even a play coordinator with terminally ill children. Unfortunately it seemed to smother out any of the notes of forgiveness, love, empathy or reconciliation which were so desperately needed to be heard. Without that support I believed I needed to continue to speak out and so I did.

October 17, 1978 - Tuesday -" I rewrote the letter I had printed in the Utah Chronicle. I made it a little more readable to the gay and lesbian audience and signed it L.M.L. It was submitted and printed in the Open Door, a gay and lesbian newspaper in Salt Lake City. "

I later expanded the L.M.L. initials into a ghost writer name, Loren Matthew Lakewood, which I used when submitting written works. During this time my dear friend, Brad became active in the Church and was preparing to go on a mission.

Sometime that summer Brad and I had a last picnic together. We had a campfire in the canyon. To me it was very romantic and beautiful. I did not realize we were saying goodbye for this life. I wrote him two poems. One about our mountain hikes and the other about our last evening.

Millcreek Revisited

Beneath the trees invades my reality.

Your voice against the drawl of the stream,

Beside me as we hiked into the mountains,

Your tee shirt pulled on me and your sweat,

Teasing me like a saint to be worshipped

But a lover to be fondled and I caressed you.

It was the truth. Your silence murdered me each day.

But loneliness was the agent.

It drove us toward each other.

You have forgotten places, they are dead now.

There will be new ones for both of us.

Yet while you are away, I find myself

Beneath the trees offering up my memories

As an incense to every season.

Loren Matthew Lakewood

Phenomena Of Light

Firelight on your face that harvest eve,

Sparks aflight which died as fast as passion needs control.

Our walk through moonlit scenery,

A bright intensity that mocked the day.

Venturing through a passageway of trees,

Whose shadows opened up to bathe us in a radiance,

Making our bodies seem interposed.

It was eternal for a moment.

Whether gods or devils set the play,

This phenomena of light sealed up our fraternity.

Loren Matthew Lakewood

My children knew and liked Brad. When Brad went on his mission Cory came into my life. My children met Cory. I don't know how but we had dinner together with them (according to my journal). I grew to care for Cory but he was young and I was just one of the first people with which he thought he cared.

My journals are filled at this time with long letters to President Kimball with numerous complaints. They are a burden to even reread them so I will just say that during this period leading to my separation from my wife there were moments of forgiveness, anger, pain and love. None of which could save a marriage like ours. These letters were the preparation to my June 8, 1979 letter requesting my name to be taken from the rolls of the Church. (excommunication)

March 20 1979 - Tuesday - "Gave my letter to President Kimball which stated my objection to marrying homosexuals to heterosexuals and the Church News recent articles alluding to the death penalty for the homosexuals anciently in the Bible being a threat on us today. He had told me the modern Church was being lenient on the homosexual who anciently was put to death. I told him I was leaving the Church. "

My journals do not clarify to me whether I saw him that day in person or spoke to him that day or another time on the phone.

April 26, 1979 - Thursday - "The Masters and Johnson team in sexual studies reports 40% of gays can be cured. My wife thinks I can change. Some other friends who I have met at the study group at the University gay consciousness group have had their spouses point to the Masters and Johnson report saying they can change.

With the death penalty statements being made by the Church there seems no protection. I am becoming very paranoid. I am a foreigner in a world of people who would threaten to murder me

in the name of God. I suppose that is the height of paranoia but with these threats at my throat and all the misinformed heterosexuals around I feel afraid. It has been reported that a group of women were at the head of getting gays out of the Jay Welch Chorale I belong too. I need to leave this place.(Salt Lake City, Utah) "

End of Marriage, Membership & Employment

June 9, 1979 -Saturday -" I handed in the letter requesting my excommunication. I moved my things out of my wife's apartment along with much of the furniture which my former wife did not want in the house to remind her of our relationship. I moved into my own apartment. Mary and I embraced last night and wept about our leaving each other. In the privacy of my new apartment and with the loneliness of not being able to tuck in my children and tell them stories as I did each night when I lived at home, I sobbed bitter tears all night. "

I thought that few people would know what it was like to say goodbye to someone whom you believed you were united for eternity. Someone whom you loved but whom you knew would never be happy with you. To see your children's home no longer your own place of belonging.

Mary and I had few disagreements in our years of marriage. I was stern with her to a point I would always regret but I had also shared tenderness and love the best I could. We had several angry noisy arguments before I left. As I look back at my smashing household items in uncontrolled rage it was a way to say that it is better that I'm not here. While I seldom break material objects today, I find my frustration has increased to disagreeableness lending myself to be unfit for any type of relationship.

June 10, 1979 -Sunday -" Awoke to a horrible loneliness for my children.... but thank God the children came over to my new apartment. We went to Liberty Park nearby and played. It was wonderful. We ate dinner. It was so beautiful with beautiful people all around and especially my dear sons. We walked through the Tracy Aviary. A nice day with my children. "

During this time I also had great empathy for my wife but I knew she would never be happy with me. I wanted for her to find a companion in life so I withdrew more and more from relating to her and often sorrowfully treated her with further withdrawal behavior.

There was trauma due to my family condition but added sorrow at my employment in the hospital. I wrote on June 15th 1979 "Kent, Allen , Shaylynn all passed away this year." They were children I worked with every day. I felt like taking my own life not for being a homosexual but for losing my own beloved children, my close family relationship and all the newly added grief in my life.

June 17, 1979 - Sunday - " Called my children to tell them how much I appreciated my Father's Day presents and cards. I would give up being a homosexual if I could to have them in my home again every day. I started several medications for depression but the anti-depressants only

seem to make it worse. I appreciate all the visits by my children. I appreciate my wife bringing them also. I have learned what quality time with children entails. I have done everything humanly possible to give them a father even though I am not in a relationship with their mother anymore. "

July 5, 1979 - Thursday -" My mother usually sends Christmas presents in July for our Christmas in July celebration but since I am separated she has stopped treating me as her son, as if I needed anymore punishment. I think she has been listening to our born again aunt who tells her I am going to hell. The children and I made Christmas cookies. I got them presents. I have a Christmas tree.

I met David Chipman who like myself was from New York State. He had been a member of the Orchard Park Branch near my home town of Buffalo, New York. David told me that he was a student at B.Y.U. but was expelled. He related that he went for a ride into the Provo Canyon with another male student who he thought was a person interested in forming a relationship with him. They arrived at a place of privacy and got comfortable.

David said in conversation with this man he touched the man's leg and security from B.Y.U. were swarming around his car. He was actually followed by security, entrapped by this fellow student, and was under some kind of arrest. He said he nearly drove off the road with his car several times as the security officers from B.Y.U. followed behind him back to campus to interrogate him.

He told me that he thought someone had been opening his mail where he lived off campus. He became very emotionally distressed all evening during our talk. He slept over and we cuddled. He did become aroused but I thought not to complicate either of our situations.

I felt sad that the B.Y.U. security were still behaving in a way that violated privacy especially off campus. It reminded me of my situation at B.Y.U. with security taking license plate numbers of the cars outside of Gay bars, asking for people's names from those found to be gay. "

Later I was to learn from Jason (former B.Y.U. student) and his lover that David had gone to Brother Vaughn Featherstone for counsel. He was told to change his name to David Kennedy and was reported to be married. That was the desperate advice given in those days by men trusted with our eternal life.

It was also during this time I met up with one of my missionary companions in a gay bar. I knew he was a homosexual when I met him in the mission home. He seemed very flamboyant to me. So I had thought if he could go I could go.

David Chipman was thinking of rooming with me but after our talk, overnight cuddling and some telephone conversations he did not keep in touch. There seemed to be a myriad of people coming out of the woodwork who were gay and had similar experiences to mine during that period which were surfacing in my life.

July 13, 1979 - Friday -" Mary (my wife) read me the Deseret News article they did on the University Medical Center and the work I was doing there. After hearing it, I wept. "

I had been employed at the University of Utah Medical Center in Salt Lake City for several years. When I applied I was hired in a position on the pediatric ward as a children's play coordinator or therapist in charge of children's recreation, education and entertainment in a hospital setting.

I had worked with children frequently in my life. I was everything from a Methodist camp counselor to assistant art therapist at Granite Mental Health Children's Services. I was doing an excellent job at the hospital as illustrated by the Deseret News article Young Patients Given A Safe Place and The Pediatric Playroom Is Never Dull.

The Pediatric Playroom Is Never Dull

by Mary Dickson

Deseret News at staff writer

July 13, 1979 Friday

He's an artist, a singer, a writer, an illustrator, an actor and a kid's best friend. To the kids in the U. of U. Medical Center's Pediatric Ward, Don Attridge is invaluable. He's the man that takes the drudgery out of being in the hospital.

Attridge is the Children's Play Coordinator for the Medical Center. (" You have to have a lot of talents here, " he says.)

His pediatric education and entertainment program tries to give the young patients as much outside exposure as possible. He schedules daily activities that give every patient some pleasant experiences while in the hospital.

Despite his shoestring budget, his daily schedules are impressive; his juggling masterful. One day it's piano, toys, and games, rock collection, wall mural painting, a visit from Smokey the Bear (Attridge in disguise), a cooking hour with marshmallow treats and a movie.

The next day it's visits from Hogle Zoo animals, crafts, swimming,(with written permission from parents and doctors), musical instrument hour, Who am I (with an historical person- Attridge in costume-visiting each patient), crafts and more movies. Another day it's Nurse and Doctor make believe, a visit from a local mountain man, art mural painting, swimming, making homemade ice cream, and origami (Japanese paper folding).

The next day brings a cookie monster decorating contest, writing a story, a puppet show, a popcorn party and a song fest with guitarist William Waterhouse. And, by the end of the week, Attridge still has energy for a treasure hunt, exploring with binoculars or microscopes, and a patio party.

With Attridge at the Helm, there's never a dull moment in the pediatric playroom. Because the man of boundless energy and good cheer has more tricks up his sleeve than a magician, more charisma than a Pied Piper. No one appreciates him more than the sick children, unless it's their parents.

"Don does a terrific job with the kids! " says one mother. " He does everything he can to keep the kids occupied and happy. He has something even the most bedridden can do, even if it's just to sit and talk to them. Parents sure appreciate him. My daughter still talks about him."

Teachers applaud Attridge for helping with the education of hospital-ridden children.

Forty-five percent of the kid's in Don's pediatric playroom are terminal. Many of these children will never see the outside again, and that makes Attridge's job especially trying.

"I love these kids, " he says. " We lost a 16 year old girl recently. You show a movie she really digs and the next morning she's passed away. That's hard. Some days I just have to get away from it all. "

"I take a burn-out day once a month and go away from everything. I think it's my makeup that allows me to keep going. I've had a hell of a life. I can tolerate seeing the agony that children go through because they need me so much and I want them to live so much. It takes a lot of energy."

In the playroom, he helps his little friends with stick loom weaving, needlepoint, ceramics, leather crafts, painting or drawing. He encourages them and tells them even their sloppiest paint job is "a beautiful piece."

"Pick out the color you want to do and go ahead and do it," he encourages." You do what you want to. I know you can handle it."

"Hang in there!" he calls to a patient who leaves the room to go down to surgery. "Good luck I love you."

His rapport with the children is evident in every comment. He doesn't act as a parent or an authority figure. He says he doesn't criticize or judge. He gives the kids choices and he lets them make decisions. If a child wants to paint a ceramic cat purple, Attridge gives her the purple paint and his blessing. If another child is worried about the head nurse getting mad, Attridge says "Tough Noogies if we get in trouble."

"Parents are always telling these kids what to do. Doctors and Nurses and everyone else orders them around. I'm a little unorthodox in a lot of ways I do things. But I get it done. I do it my way. I just try to give them a little power," he says....

"These kids need some sort of control over their lives, even if it's only painting their cat purple. "

The kids paint pictures for him and hang them on the wall. For them, Attridge is more than a friend. He's a mentor, a mediator and even a lifesaver of sorts. In a hospital full of needles and pins and tests and more tests, his playroom is the only refuge. He won't allow doctors and nurses to examine children or give injections in his " safe room. "

Attridge puts in at least eight hours of overtime a week. "I love my work. I go home exhausted every day, but it's a nice exhaustion. "

Every week the hospital gets about 20 new patients and Attridge learns all their names. " You get close to all of them after a few days, " he says.

As play coordinator, Attridge also works with the volunteers who come in. Sometimes he works with doctors to tell them how to better relate with children.

Naomi Anderson started the pediatric program about six years ago to take the load off nurses. "They don't have time to do this with kids, " explains Attridge. He came to the program last May from a job as an art therapist at Granite Mental Health.

"I had worked in the hospital before. A nurse told me they needed a new play coordinator and I knew it was for me. I had costumes so I worked up a program where I'd wear a costume each week and give the kids a little history lesson. "

The hospital liked Attridge's ideas and hired him for the position over five recreational therapists. When he took over, he put up bookcases and a piano. He started several arts and crafts projects. A sorority donated some musical instruments and Attridge implemented them into his program. He sees his program as three dimensional--entertainment, educational and expression of emotions.

" Besides crafts, I wanted the kids to act out and get rid of their aggressions. I have a play operation where they operate on a doll. You wouldn't believe the shots they give it! "

He even takes the kids to movies around town with special hospital and parental permission. " There are so many people who give to the program that it would be hard to credit them all, " he says. " Movie tickets, films we see here and tickets to the Heber Creeper have all been donated. "

This month, he is planning a Christmas in July to break up the summer. He'll dress up as Santa and give little presents to the kids. (Anyone interested in donating should call.....)

Attridge says he plans to stay at the hospital for another five years. Eventually, he'd like to start his own school.

"I see a lot of kids who don't fit in," he says. " I'd like to provide a school where they can fit in and their needs can be met. Children are my great love. "

When I sought the position at the hospital I consciously wanted to support my wife and children. I believed I was the best person for the job. Claudia Berenson, the psychiatrist who interviewed me for the position loved my ideas for a new program for the children in the hospital. No one asked me my sexual orientation. The psychiatrist did not think that I was in any way a hindrance to the care of these terminally ill children.

Though I was to undergo great changes in my family life with separation from them I managed to give myself to my employment. I considered myself safer at the University Hospital than anywhere in Utah since the University was considered a seat of learning for many well educated and opened minded individuals in the state. I was to learn that there was no safe place for me anywhere.

July 16, 1979 - Monday - "Contacted by Karl Idsvoog and Chad Dobson of Channel 2 News for a documentary about Homosexuality and the Mormon Church. It made me recall the documentary I had done earlier filmed by Andrew Welch for K.Q.E.D. in California. I will view the Welch documentary Monday with Karl to give me an idea of what to say in this documentary if I decide to participate in this informative work. "

July 23, 1979 - Monday - "Karl Idsvoog picked me up. We watched the Andrew Welch documentary at the Channel 2 studios. It is helping me prepare what I want to say. He drove me home and I gave him some Christmas cookies..... I still fear some type of reprisal from the Church, its security or a berserk member. "

My friend David (not Chipman) called. He worked in the genealogical department in the church office building. He had a gay male companion but lived with his parents. His mother was very ill. He had been questioned at work concerning being homosexual. He was turned in by a fellow employee. The Bishop was going to the Stake President with these reports so David was concerned how this would affect his mother's health. David decided to resign his position. I tried to be empathetic.

October 9, 1979 -" Chad Dobson said he was filming the documentary with my face showing. I don't know if I am up to doing the filming that way. They told me that it was time to get the issue out of the shadows and speak openly. Chad and Karl assured me if anything happened to my job the television station would endeavor to assist me in finding a new job or financial assistance until I became employed. Still I have been reviewing my journal so I can explain what I have been through in the Church."

Later I would learn from my roommate who was a radio commentator that Channel 2 News would deny even having started plans to film such a documentary. I was never given any assistance or validation from what was to follow as the end of my employment.

October 11, 1979 - "The Jay Welch Chorale is taping music for a Christmas Album. Many of the former members of the Tabernacle Choir are joining because in the Tabernacle Choir there has been new time and age limits. I think we sound better than the Tabernacle Choir.

I went to a local health spa. I was speaking to another Mormon who had been to B.Y.U. who had difficulties being gay there. He mentioned that Jason, one of the students I had turned into security at B.Y.U. was there.

I begged for him to ask Jason if I could speak to him. When I walked up to Jason he said, " Bless Your Soul. " He was filled with forgiveness and kindness. He embraced me with a hug.

He spoke of the Teaching of the Inner Christ Movement which he and his companion had become a member. This group had given him the tools with which to forgive me. He had found a companion close to the time this whole B.Y.U. incident had occurred. He had a relationship with his partner for 13 years. I was amazed how he had forgiven me. Since I saw this behavior in him I started attending this church with them.

October 17, 1979 - " Jeff, a cystic fibrosis patient whom I had taken for a row boat ride with my children, his mother wrote a very praiseworthy note to Dr. Glasgow at the Medical Center concerning the time I took to care for Jeff. It made me cry. I worked with a lot of children today. I love my position at the hospital. "

November 2, 1979 - " Tom started today with me in the Pediatric ward. He reminds me of an Irish leprechaun. It will be great with more help as I have been taking care of the whole ward and other sections of the hospital by myself. Often I would go to the burn unit or cystic fibrosis clinic or psyche ward to help a child who needed a craft project, books or other recreation I had devised in my program for the children. "

November 12, 1979 - Monday -" I approached John Dwamn head of public relations for the University of Utah Medical Center. I told him I was going to be in a documentary about the Mormon Church and Homosexuality.

He asked me if I still was a homosexual. I looked at him in a bit of disbelief. Yes I am still a homosexual. Is it something I could give up for lent. I thought I was giving him enough warning so he could prepare an answer to the press if there was any problem. I realize that I am naive to think such a thing but I am so tired of lying to everyone.

I am judging that I am at the most liberal of all state institutions in Utah. I think I am protected and this would give him a way to explain that I was a good employee and the hospital would support my position to speak. "

My mind was concentrating on so many occurrences in my life that this one consciously did not seem to be a problem. This was not Brigham Young University Medical Center. It was a faculty who when in classes were many times very liberal educators open to free speech. My work with

the children had received so much praise, positive community publicity and parental support I believed all would see me as an employee not as a threat. This was unfortunately, my fantasy.

November 13 1979 - Tuesday - "Helen Kee and Kerma Jones the hospital's Head of Nursing and Head of Personnel requested me to come in to the personnel office. They informed me that John Dwamn had spoken to the Administrator of the hospital Jerry Smith. They said I had done an excellent job but I could not return to the pediatrics floor again that day. This would be my last day. They were willing to find me another job in the hospital. I did not want another job but if this meant I had no income then maybe I would allow them to show they were not without heart.

They told me that it would have been o.k. if I did not go public. I told them the documentary hadn't even been filmed as yet. They told me the hospital would be burned in effigy. The beds would be emptied. It would be too much stress for the families. They reported that the wealthy donors would withdraw their funding for the hospital. I did not know where it came from within me but I had had enough. I responded that I would sue the hospital for denying my freedom of speech. "

November 14, 1979 - Wednesday -" Started filming the documentary. Karl was very candid as he started saying how do you feel now that you have lost your position at the University Hospital. I was sitting there in my room with cameras rolling.

Well I felt stupid for trusting any one. I felt that I had made perhaps the greatest misperception of my life. I had no idea the people would think I am an alien invader. I am the person that one everyone was praising for doing such a good job. It counts for nothing? I am in panic, shock, anger and absolute submission. "

December 7, 1979 - Friday -" Personnel offered many job leads but all of them were either a cut in pay or the staff who interviewed me had been informed I was gay which slowed the process drastically. The X-Ray Department questioned if I could be considered a risk to be left alone with the patients.

Were these people being rational. Personnel said I could not work directly with the patients again. Helen Kee and Kerma Jones told me they knew about gays in other areas of employment in the hospital but they were not appearing in this kind of documentary. The Administration did not want negative publicity. Nobody asked what I was going to say or how it was going to be handled. It entailed nothing derogatory toward the hospital, unless they considered my hours of service to them as such. "

December 26, 1979 - Wednesday -" I have settled on a position in the hospital, sterilizing the surgical instruments and bed pans because there were no more funding made available nor time for monetary extension to be made to me. I had to take the job. When I went up to the Pediatric floor in a surgical gown, picking up the bed pans in front of the very children I had been a play therapist weeks before it proved too much and I resigned from the whole affair. I walked out of the hospital. "

I was completely irrational by this time from all the traumatic experiences that I did not even care that I had no money, no job and no self confidence.

It would take years before any lawsuit could be settled so from that period on I took any job available which might enable me to support myself and give my former wife support. The hospital and (indirectly the community influenced by the Church) never realized by denying me employment they were punishing my family who depended on some type of support from me. Before this time I believed I gave 200.00 a month but after the job loss I became less capable of maintaining my obligations.

December 30, 1979 - Sunday - "I was excommunicated last Sunday. The reason I feel little sorrow is it is the first time I have taken control of my own life. Where I am, no one in the Church can hurt me any longer. Now in the place of eternal separation from my Church I am at least what I consider safe distance from the pain I have experienced. I can still speak with my Creator without being abused.

Through the struggle of over a dozen therapists, counsel from the Apostle and President of the Church, Spencer W. Kimball, Aversion Shock Therapy at the hands of Dr. Robert Card, a full time mission, employed in the Temple, member of the Tabernacle Choir, marriage in the Temple, children, family life, Strict obedience to the commandments for several years into the marriage, Hours on my knees begging God to lift this homosexuality from me, I have come to complete realization that I am still a homosexual.

I have fought the fight! I have done all I knew humanly possible. And still I am a homosexual and not a heterosexual. If there is no other way as President Kimball has indicated, To Me, There Is No Way. I have knocked on the door till my knuckles were bloody now I take them and place healing salve on them and wrap them up in cloth to heal once again. The door is closed. I did not close it. I do not believe I can knock again in such a manner as I have done. I did not lose my testimony of the Church. The Church lost my testimony.

In the words of the Dicken's character in my favorite movie Scrooge " Take me from this place there is only sorrow here."

Death and Resurrection

February 4, 1980 - Monday -" I called Karl Idsvoog and told him to erase the tapes which I had filmed for the documentary. I do not want to sabotage my life anymore. This was not the place for me (Salt Lake City, Utah). I must really think of finding a place where I can work out my life without harm coming to that process."

July 9, 1980 - Wednesday -" ... I must now start to write a book "Mormon and Gay" It will be my own documentary. I will write it to help people like me express our testimonies of the truth not

only of the Church but of our love for each other. It will be for me a way to help the leaders of the Church see our sincerity and willingness to do everything humanly possible to find the narrow pathway to the Savior. "

For the next few months I struggled with just maintaining a balance between spending time with my sons and making a living.

August 31, 1980 - Sunday -" I wrote CHRISTMAS EVERYDAY A STORYBOOK in the Salt Lake Temple while I worked at the suitcase desk over a decade ago. Today I completed the last illustration and I am ready to set to print my efforts. I am still alive. "

I spent many hours with my children after all these traumatic occurrences in our lives. I did the best I could to love them and provide a father's love for them. Though sometimes I did not see them for weeks at a time due to my extreme depression I still loved them. I did not want them to see me so desolate. When they were with me they did not get the impression I was on the verge of suicide.

October 6, 1980 - Monday -" I went to Rosecrest Elementary School to my children's classes. My youngest son in first grade was so proud to introduce me as Leonardo Da Vinci who I was dressed like. I said to my son " tell the class who I really am." My son said, " My Dad."

When I went to my older son's class I told his classmates that my son was mentioned as a character in My Christmas Storybook which I showed them. The children surrounded my son and patted him and hugged him.

I'd like to thank my Heavenly Father for such a choice experience though I cannot fathom all the pain that has happened to me. I hugged and kissed my youngest son. My son told his class, I kissed my Daddy. "

October 7, 1980 - Tuesday -" I was nervous about my son's classes visiting the Salt Lake Art Center (where I work.) I went to the front desk as my son's classes arrived. All the children in a united chorus raised their hands and said Hello Mr. Attridge! They kept saying hi all day. My sons kept their hands up in the air so I could see them in the bus and when they passed by me.

Both groups went to hear the Symphony next door in Symphony Hall. I ran outside to the buses hoping they had not left before I could say goodbye to my children. The buses had not left so I was able to climb aboard to say goodbye to my sons.

Several of the leaders in The Art Center told me how successful this program seemed to be. It is one in which I had suggested and taken part so I went to a private room and wept tears of joy that I could do something with children and still inspire them. I am alive. "

October 16, 1980 - Thursday - "Saw Ivan tonight. (He and I had dated before I married my wife.) He seemed grieved during the time we were romantically involved tonight. Then he told me that

he was married and had fathered children following the Church program. He worked for the Church and feared for his job. I really loved Ivan. This day had rekindled strong feelings I had for him so many years ago. I felt strangely free from some of my pain as I saw him struggling. As we loved each other he wept. "

October 28, 1980 - Tuesday - ".....Louise Conover gave me the specifics concerning my impending law suit against the University of Utah Medical Center."

November 1, 1980 - Saturday - " William Lockhart phoned to start the lawsuit on the University Medical Center. Whether to use my name is the problem since I have a family. It was decided that I would be John Doe. "

November 26, 1980 - Wednesday - " Visited with David Leta and Gerald Sunnyville, lawyers chosen by the A.C.L.U. for my claim against the University Hospital. Had lunch with Trevor Southey a successful artist. He was married and shared many of the same experiences of grief and pain I had experienced. "

November 29, 1980 - Saturday - " I am beginning to get small glimpses of my mission in life. If I could return to the church and do all the good I can but remain unmarried until when I am on the other side I will maybe feel different or be different even remembering what occurred in the premortal existence before I came to the earth. This is very submissive but eternity would be so dull without being continually increasing in knowledge and being able to create eternally. For I am a creator. I want to create for my eternity. "

Though I had lost everything through speaking what I believed to be the truth of my life, I had not lost my testimony of the Restored Gospel. I was trying to find some way that I would not be considered o.k. though in reality I felt not o.k..

These particular ideas were fed to me by the Church through interviews with Social Services and other leaders.

December 8, 1980 - Monday - "... the layout work began on my book Christmas Everyday A Storybook.....so much of this book is from my experiences in New York State and with my family. When it is completed I truly believe it will be significantJohn Lennon was murdered tonight. I wonder if there is a place safe enough to live. America has become too violent for me. "

December 22, 1980 - Monday - "cannot believe it is so close to Christmas and I haven't gotten a Christmas tree. I want one so badly. Please God I ask for a Christmas tree to come to me and for my children. "

Due to the fact that the kids had to be with their mother, I would not be able to have my children with me on Christmas Eve but this year I was glad because this was the first year of my life I did not have my all-important Christmas tree.

One year later I wrote this small essay concerning my experience of the Christmas of 1980:

Christmas Without A Tree

Each year when I was a child my parents had a Christmas tree in our home for the holidays. During those years we often had a long needle open branched tree that looked like a green cookie monster or a short needled pencil point of a tree loaded with bubble lites. Even when my sister and her family came to Utah my wife and I put up a potted Balsam Christmas tree that July in her honor. I saw my sister from New York State so few Christmases that we made presents, stuffed stockings, and even had turkey dinner for her.

Christmas in July was celebrated each year without fail following this family visit. A Christmas tree in July and December was our family tradition without exception. This year December Christmas would be different.

My wife and I decided together that our marriage was not working. It was hurting both of us. Without revenge we started to live true to ourselves and keep up positive communication. Separated, I was living in a small studio apartment in the avenues, divorce was inevitable. I wondered what kind of Christmas it would be especially since I had been laid off in October.

I had paid deposits on clothes and toys for my children and several special gifts for my former wife. Though we were separated we still honored each other's friendship. Unemployment checks were going for necessities only. The checks would come each week on Wednesday or Thursday. Since Christmas was Thursday I might be without money for the holidays. With job possibilities slim this time of year it seemed a difficult time.

Usually I would have a tree by Thanksgiving weekend but each week of December a new bill, food costs, and a medical problem left no money to buy a tree. Finally Christmas week and still no tree. I was even tempted by every tree I saw in people's yards or by going into the mountains for a tree but I knew the unsettling penalty would counter the meaning of the beauty I so longed for in my small apartment.

It was the day of Christmas Eve. After a disappointing job interview and earning a few dollars doing odd jobs, I rode my bicycle back from town to my avenues apartment. I hoped that at least the unemployment check had arrived and it would help me be the Santa Claus my children expected.

Often the mail box would be empty and that would mean the check could come Thursday and Christmas would be over. I felt that I would have failed my children.

As I opened the box, there it was. My spirit vibrated. I flew to the bank nearby and felt like a millionaire as my wallet bulged with even this small amount of money.

The toys.....Yes! I had made it, they were still in lay-away. I got my former wife and children's presents, candy for the stockings, and food for the Christmas Eve dinner I was to bring as my former wife had invited me to be with them this Christmas Eve. I had the presents wrapped as there was not time to do so myself. I gathered my treasures around me to go be with my children.

A tall plainly dressed blonde man asked me on the street for a quarter. Though it was one of my last dollars, I handed him a dollar; for I knew I was in his place just hours ago. It reminded me I was not poor.

It turned out to be a happy evening; there was love shared by all of us. As I returned to my apartment, it was void of Christmas spirit without my traditional Christmas tree.

The day after Christmas I walked by a nearby garden center. I ventured inside and inquired if they had any Christmas trees left. No. The boy had chopped them up and discarded the remains in the dumpster. Perhaps one might have survived, I pleaded with the clerk. I begged to be able to work for it, charge it. I told them I had no Christmas tree and it was the first year in my life without a tree. I was told I was welcome to see if the dumpster contained a tree in one piece.

I hurried to the large garbage bin, my pride overcome with desire but all I could see was pieces of limbs. I spent a long time removing each limb one by one until almost at the bottom of the pile there was a tree! It was a tall beauty, short needled and still fresh, pungent smelling. It was exactly the kind I always had in my home. I was filled with thankfulness and I wept.

I carried that tree seven blocks across crowded intersections, passed curious people's gazes. I walked by discarded dried up brown Christmas trees lying at the curb. Finally I reached my apartment.

I set the tree in my plastic waste basket filled with water. I made Christmas cookies to hang on it, and set up my children's toy train beneath the tree. That night, as the lights from it dazzled in my apartment, my children came for a visit. They didn't really understanding that I had just put up the tree. As they played with their toys I knew they felt happy and loved in my humble home. I had peace finally! I had the gift I really wanted...and a Christmas tree.

I entered my "Christmas Without A Tree" story, one year later in a contest requesting the Christmas you remembered most. It was for the local paper. It was not accepted. The climate in Salt Lake City was in my opinion not friendly to a single parent household especially the husband. Though I realized I was no James Michener.

January 22, 1981 - Thursday - "My Christmas Storybook" was printed today by Fred of PIP. I received 20 copies. I sold my first copy to Mrs. Welch (Jay Welch's stepmother) in my apartment building. My second copy sold to James from the Tabernacle choir whose marriage had

dissolved. He said he thought I was lost because I left the choir and my wife. I set aside one for President Kimball as well. "

February 2, 1981 - Monday -" Mary called concerning our divorce. She thought I had changed back to being a heterosexual. I was amazed she could still think that I could be straight after all she knew we experienced. Renae from Teaching of the Inner Christ read my Christmas Storybook to a boy in a coma and he lifted his head out of his coma. That made me feel better today."

May 28, 1981 - Thursday - "...signed the Law suit against the University of Utah Medical Center."

June 11, 1981 - Thursday -" Child of Heaven, Child of Earth written by Francis Curry and I (our poetry booklet) went to press today. I feel that these artistic endeavors working out makes me feel like not giving up. I am trying every avenue I know to find some feeling of success in my life from all the apparent failures so far. "

September 22, 1981 - Tuesday -" Mary told me our divorce was final today. November 22, 1972 - September 22, 1981... It does seem that whatever she and I started was done so with great expectation. I sorrow with her. It seems sad, sorrowful but I can not see any other way. "

October 1, 1981 -" President Kimball is close to death. It seems so strange. I felt so angry now excommunicated, divorced. I stand all amazed. There is a certain peace. "

February 2, 1982 - Tuesday -" Gerald Sunnyville prepared me for depositions. I can't believe that Kerma, Helen, and Jerry lied saying I flaunted my homosexuality in front of the hospital when they never even knew I was homosexual till I told them. They said I mutually agreed to change jobs and that I was not fired. What a lie! I told them I would sue the hospital if they fired me from the Pediatric Ward. Their jobs must of really been put on the line to make up such false statements.

July 6, 1982 -" My principles are still important to me. Though others look upon me and my kind with disdain I must become all I am capable of being. God bless me. I bless me. Make me loving. Make me caring. Make me strong. Make me a seeker of truth."

January 5, 1983 - Wednesday -" David Leta my attorney informed me of a proposed settlement which involved an award of 15,000 dollars and a 12,500 dollar a year position in the University of Utah Medical Center. I won the right to appear in a documentary but I could not mention the hospital while employed.

David and Gerald told me that a person by the name of Dr. Cameron was to be brought in by the state to discredit all gays employed in hospital work. His general testimony as a psychologist was that gay people molest children more than heterosexual people therefore I was considered

unfit to work with children. My lawyers had done research which found just the opposite was true but this man was a very hostile witness. "

(Dr. Cameron was removed from the Psychiatric Association of America for many of these views.)

Essentially my attorney's capitulated to get the settlement. I wanted to go to trial come what may, I was ready. David said the jury selection was hampered due to the lack of constitutional rights for gays. I did not understand but it looked like they had given up. "

January 6, 1983 - Thursday -" Due to the length of time of a trial and the strong advice of my attorney's I authorized the proposed settlement. "

January 13, 1983 - Thursday -" ...Lawsuit in the paper and on the radio. Bob Lange from 20/20 wants to speak to me. I have had enough sensationalism for one lifetime. "

January 28 1983 -" Interview with Bob Lange 20/20 concerning homosexuality and the Mormon Church. Mr. Lange told me of a reported class at B.Y.U. in which the class mates would get credit by going out and entrapping a fellow student in homosexual behavior or other standards offenses. I told him I only knew of the request by Apostle Kimball and campus security to turn in names of fellow students. That seemed to be the end of his interest. "

February 1, 1983 -" I was informed by Tom Colburn (new head of hospital personnel) that Bill Evans assistant attorney general said I can not have a job working with patients. This was not in line with what the settlement stated so I brought one of my attorney's Gerald Sunneyville to make my stand. The state was doing everything possible to not live up to the agreement. "

February 4, 1983 -" David Leta (my attorney) straightened out the hospital so I can work with patients. He spoke to Bill Evans directly. There was a position in rehabilitation therapy opened but the hospital would not approve me for the position. "

I decided to avoid wasting my time during the negotiations. With the small sum of 3,000 dollars which I ended up with through the law suit I left the country to take some time revitalize my desire to live.

My lawyers had taken close to 11,000 dollars of the 15,000 dollar settlement. They had spent close to four times that amount on the case but according to the A.C.L.U. who had taken the case and secured these two attorneys, their attorney's (A.C.L.U.) usually take the case without compensation.

My attorney's actions were a violation of the agreement according to Sally Pedler, head of the A.C.L.U. in Utah. Well at least it appeared all over and I stood up for myself and other gay and lesbian people. No one would be able to fire another gay in Utah for appearing in a documentary concerning the Mormon Church."

June 6, 1983 - Monday - " ... Have been working in the University Hospital Medical Center in the admissions office typing into a computer all day names of admits. Tom Colburn (new Head of Personnel) asked me how I like my work. I told him " I Hate It. " That should make him happy as he did everything possible to make it difficult for me to find any position. He had been involved in another altercation involving a friend of mine who worked in personnel accusing her of smoking pot in the bathroom. "

It was a very difficult comeback. The people all knew I was a gay. I was the homosexual that sued the hospital. I did not spend a day without seeing someone make some kind of gay comment in front of me or behind my back. I stayed in my position until September 12, 1983 when out of a small realization I had made a difference for people like me and I could not progress any further at this hospital in the position, I resigned.

January 31, 1984 - "I prayed on my knees this night that I might meet someone, my companion, my beloved. It is right for me to have a companion even of my own sex. It would not be good for me to be alone or just go from person to person for the rest of my life.."

It was then I met Wayde. He was a marine. He lived with me for the next six months. It was a lesson in relating to a person but he would not be a companion to me for the rest of my life. I don't think anyone can companion me until I heal myself. Louise Hay the great metaphysical teacher says "You can not really love until you forgive. "

I spent some of my creative time writing lyrics for the solos I would be singing at Religious Science and Teaching of the Inner Christ. These two new age religious groups helped me heal some of the wounds of being a gay Mormon mostly with hugs.

The minister of the Religious Science Church in Salt Lake City, Reverend Albert Herd was the closest thing in my lifetime to having a father. He guided me to heal myself over this difficult period of the ending of my marriage, ending membership in the church, and ending my employment. He gained little but gave everything he could give. The teachings of these group were built upon unconditional love. I could not have survived otherwise. The healing would take a lifetime.

March 15, 1984 - Wednesday - "Reverend Albert Heard passed away last Sunday. I am feeling a great loss. I cried. I feel badly because I had not seen him for a few months. Rev. Al or Uncle Al's death enabled me to finish the words I was writing for the Star Wars Yoda theme music by John Williams. It essentially was a tribute to the teachings he gave to me during these last few years.

Soaring Inward

Descending to the earth, flying through the clouds,

Entering a world of endless change. Now is the time,

Given Unto me, mold the truth of my eternity.

Take this moment let it shine.

Leave all thought of lack behind.

Let your good arrive today.

Loving fear away.

Inward we seek peace from all our stress,

Letting go we open to our best.

Glorious and vast earth now speaks to me,

Effort brings mistakes and clarity.

Let in the light, give it in return,

Loving is the power we come to learn.

Ascending from this earth, flying through the clouds

Soaring in the light eternally. I am free.

During the summertime I found a family of gay people surrounding me. Quite often I would tell my children that these friends of mine were gay to help them understand what the word 'gay' meant. Eventually I would have to tell them about myself being gay. I did so in the hope that they would be able to understand and not be ashamed of me.

I took my children for a visit to my own family in New York State during August 1984. For the most part it was positive. We had fun together except when my youngest child told me that a family member had taken him aside and told him " You're better than your father because you (the child) are a Mormon. "

My Aunt called from Arizona during my stay at my mother's house with my sons. She could have wished me well raising my sons but instead chose to tell me I was not going to heaven because I was a homosexual. I became defensive enough to say to her, " that would be fine since that would mean that she would not be where I would be. "

Some people think that it is their appointed job from the almighty to harass or conjure the gayness out of us. If they could just hear the one out of tune note they were pounding they would stop. And she plays the piano.

September 7, 1984 - " I wish I could get rid of my old self or maybe that is what I have been trying to do. I want to begin again, away from all these haunting memories of Mormonism, failure and pain."

February 3, 1985 - Sunday -" My friend Heather and I went to the American Atheist Meeting. That was interesting but without the spiritual I am left empty.....I worked on my journals. I plan to draw material from them to use in an upcoming appearance in a proposed documentary for Australian television's equivalent of 60 minutes with George Negus. Lindal Marks will be here Tuesday for filming on Sunday February 10th for the documentary. "

March 10, 1985 - Sunday-" Trevor Southey arranged a meeting with Carol Lynn Pearson who is writing a book. I believe the book she was working on had to do with her husband. Trevor, Jim, David, Michael and I attended. Jim told me I sounded hostile. I feel no empathy for the Church's policies concerning gays. I lived them and experienced hell. "

I understood that the Church beliefs about my beliefs were totally opposite. What I could not and still do not understand is why they had to hunt us down as though we were criminals. Through rhetoric from the pulpit persuading others the I was not worthy of most forms of employment.

What about our mission in life? Has this spiritual persecution forced me from my appointed purposes. It had certainly thrown me into confusion. Confusion on whether to live. The Church murdered me in a way. Not only me but my family. True I moved out but only under the pressure of living a lie. Is this the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry or for the edifying of the body of Christ?

At this point I was coming to a knowledge that I did not what to be the Church's sacrificial lamb anymore. In fact I was sick of complaining about the Church. To leave the Church completely I would have to leave Utah.

I Can Breathe Again

March 9, 1986 - I moved from Salt Lake City, Utah to San Diego California, To Heal. It was difficult to leave my sons but just three months passed and I flew them down to San Diego for the time of their lives. We went to Sea World, Disneyland, Knotts Berry Farm, San Diego Zoo, Tijuana, Mexico, and they heard me sing at Teaching of the Inner Christ.

It was during the next four years I did not allow the thought of Mormons or even the name to pass my lips nor bruise my brain. To me the Mormon Church was something I left in Salt Lake City, Utah. I could have not lived or healed otherwise.

There was only one friend whom I shared my sorry past. He seemed to bear any complaints I had with a tolerant heart. After four years I began reading old books which I had kept on the Church which seemed to be talking about world events with a prophetic accuracy. It seemed to be getting my attention though my spirit not my conscience had been seared with a hot iron living in Utah.

In 1990 I moved into the City Villa Apartments in downtown San Diego. The first persons I met were my landlord and his wife, they were Latter-Day Saints. During a period when one of my jobs ended and another one began they opened their food supply to me. They did so out of love and true friendship. It was one of the first things to turn my bruised spirit to look toward the Lord and the Church again.

I thought it strange I had moved into a building with a landlord who was L.D.S. (Mormon) The woman who lived in the apartment next to me was a member of a singles ward which just happen to have a Gay and Lesbian Discussion Group meeting in her ward. The Mission Bay Ward bulletin was handed to me through Rhonda. Now you know the rest of the discussion group story from the beginning of the book.

My sons visited me almost every summer in San Diego but only before or after Christmas. I could never have my children on Christmas eve unless I went to my former wife's home. During the summer they both found employment at Seaport Village. I was treated to discounts on Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream as well as some super sandwiches.

On July 2, 1993 one of my children moved from their mother's home in Salt Lake City to live with me..... his father. Christmas Eve, Birthday's, Christmas in July and other holidays had no conditions anymore. I was in heaven. I was the main parent for at least a little period.

In February 1992 I had secured a position as state park aid for Old Town State Historic Park which included working on Saturday and Sunday. I stopped by the Mormon Battalion Visitors Center and soon started to attend Sacrament Service there with the couples missionaries. I even took it upon myself to partake of the sacrament which for me was a renewal and a reaching out of my hand to the hand of the Lord. I did not feel anymore damned then an excommunicated person could be.

These services were wonderfully short to facilitate the opening of the Visitors Center. Music was always appreciated and my solo voice was called upon to add to the service. I brought many of my friends and acquaintances who I met while working in the park to the center to share with them what appeared as a new faith in the Gospel.

The new Bishop of the Mission Bay Ward which had the Gay and Lesbian discussion group met with me on Washington Square in Old Town, San Diego. He was not the Bishop which was involved in the discussion group. I showed him my excommunication letter. I did not explain to

him how differently I felt but he knew I had a testimony of the Church. He told me I could not be baptized.

I continued to attend the Visitor Center Services. It became my ward. One of the older missionaries had been a policeman in Salt Lake City. He had been a vice squad officer patrolling The Lounge, the famous gay bar with which I was acquainted. He seemed to have understanding for gays.

As the missionary couples at the Visitor's Center grew to know of my being a gay man, some statements against Gays were made in my presence. It was without malice to me but it was an indication that I would be fighting prejudice and ignorance once again. I can never thank all the many kindnesses shown to me there but the Church program taught its members to reject us so I discontinued attending Church there thinking the time was not right for me to return to the Church.

February 22, 1993 - Monday- "My six year friend Jerry and I went through the San Diego Temple. We went as non-members. I had fasted the day before for a medical examination and the spirit had no trouble pouring its delightful witness to me that this was indeed, the House Of The Lord.....so unattainable.

As we were following the solemn lines through many of the hallways of the Temple, an apparent non-Mormon woman remarked as she pondered the beautiful brass drinking fountains. " Wonder what they use these for? " I quipped angelically " Holy Water. "

March 27, 1993 - Saturday- "....I blessed the Derby-Pendleton Museum which I helped to restore and was working in as curator and tour guide by the power of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood which I believe in... "

Throughout the many years of being excommunicated from the Church when the need arose I prayed and called upon the priesthood which was latent within me to protect me. I had been promised that the priesthood would be a power in my possession forever. I acted and felt like it was.

I started watching sessions of the Church general conference and I was surprised to see changes in the General Authorities and my beloved Tabernacle Choir. I was glad to see one old friend, James. But many of the people I knew were no longer in the choir. I would have been in the choir twenty years.

During the summer of 1993 I took my sons on a tour of Great Britain where we were able to see places where our ancestors were married and spent their lives. I did so as a graduation present for both of them. It was difficult to return to Utah for their graduations but I believed they wanted me to be there.

July 1993 - On a tour of Great Britain with my children I saw an L.D.S. ward house in Inverness, Scotland. My children were impressed as well, so far from Utah...being home I appreciate the little carriage house I lived in and the beautiful gardens I had made in the canyon behind my apartment. "

My home was close to the city part of San Diego yet with two large sprawling pepper trees and a vegetable garden I felt like I had a home in the country. I was amazed at the produce my garden was supplying for my family and myself. My friends also benefitted from my abundance. I thought I must have been doing something right.

"Thy barns be filled with plenty....(Prov. 3:10)obedient ye shall eat the good of the land...(Isa. 1:19).

May 2, 1994 - Monday- "I went to my first San Diego based Affirmation group meeting.... there is a married heterosexual couple who are acting as facilitators to the group. He is the High Priest quorum teacher and she in the relief society.

Realization: I did not have to suffer for all these years. These gay men, lesbian women and bisexuals believed in the church, live gospel principles and have nowhere to go when it comes to going to Church. But they feel O.K. about themselves and have testimonies. I liked that! It sounded and felt right!

We were meeting with members of the Church sharing our same testimonies of the Gospel. That is what I have wanted to do all along.

The therapists revealed that fellow members of the Mormon Church wondered about these very active Mormon therapist's sexual orientation just because they were involved with counseling the Gays and Lesbians within the Mormon Church through Affirmation. They reiterated to the members that they were heterosexual.

I'm still not clear on whether Gays and Lesbians will receive fair treatment in my lifetime. I hope that most will become members of a ward and worship the Lord as does the rest of the Church.

It was pointed out by the therapists that GRIEF is what all of us gay and lesbian Mormons are dealing with in the group. The grief has come from being excluded the Church and the members it influences. I didn't consciously realize that grief was what I was feeling along with anger. I knew that my past had caused me to be very bitter. This bitterness still was not healed. But it was grief! I just know I feel different for going to the group. I feel improved, accepted, and loved for who I am. I can't seem to relate a tenth part of what was said. "

Reconciliation

May 20, 1994 - Friday- "Meeting with Stake President in Los Angeles. We were in the Stake Center within sight of the Los Angeles Temple. The Stake President said it was a " No, No " to talk about the Church in a negative way.

There was a lecture by a gay return missionary on the Scriptures in Genesis concerning the creation of animals and the creation of man. That man was not made like the animals nor that animals would not fill the loneliness of man but a helpmate was made for Adam.

The scripture that " it is not good for man to be alone " was also expounded. It was pointed out that gay men and lesbian women face a similar problem because we can not sustain for the most part a heterosexual marriage in all honesty and that " it is not good for (we as) man (woman) to be alone." Afraid to offend God we try to stop sexual intimacy with our own sex but that makes us more alone and " it is not good for man to be alone."

There were over thirty gay men and lesbian women present plus a few heterosexual couples and the Stake President. There was a humorous learning experience which occurred when the Stake President confessed that "there were some things I can't change." This referred to the years of exile many of us had experienced. From years of introspection came one Latter-Day gay return missionary who quipped, "yeah like your orientation. " After a good discomfoting laugh everyone got in touch with how much we had in common and not what separates us.

The Stake President called upon someone in the group who would be willing to contact three names who had been referred to the group by Bishops of local wards. These names were of gay men or lesbian women who might benefit from the group.

The Stake President had told us that he had gone to those presiding over him such as a regional representative to explain that he had large numbers of gays in his stake (West Hollywood) and decided to plan this group meeting for their benefit. He solicited for no apparent objection and proceeded.

The other part of the lesson was concerned with people in history who were homosexual who contributed greatly to mankind. Many works of Michelangelo, Oscar Wilde, and twentieth century men and women were examined. Including works of those present at the meeting."

As I stepped out from the meeting I walked outside so I could see the lights on the Los Angeles Temple. I had been here once before years earlier listening to the loud speakers play Come, Come Ye Saints. The same song that was played at my baptism. The song played as a postlude to the Hill Cumorah Pageant in New York State. This song I sang hundreds of times as a member of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Now in the silence I felt enabled to move toward the Gospel once again. I had endured many things. And I hoped to enjoy many new and glorious things through the gospel. I believed more so that night that We'll Find The Place. It seemed that I had found a place.

There was more hope given to me that night than any day or night I had ever spent within the gospel bounds. And yet still in my fear and paranoia I could not believe that anything good was going to happen to us.

I had called for this type of meeting twenty five years previous when I was expelled from B.Y.U. I thought of my former wife, my children, myself and the untold numbers of those who experienced grief and pain due to the way we were treated in the Church. In honor of all those in attendance who had hoped in this meeting I held my comments. I was pleased that something was being done.

How come these groups always meet in the Relief Society Room? Could it mean WE as gay men and lesbian women Latter-Day Saints need R E L I E F? It is a good place to end the pain.

June 28, 1994 - Tuesday- "I decided from last night's prayer and strong stupor of thought not to take the job working with parolees and gang members in the Hillcrest area recovery house.

When I prayed I saw a dark semicircle in my mind enclosing before me. Then the greatest stupor of thought I had ever experienced in prayer before. I felt so good that God had continued to answer my prayers and that I had witnesses of the burning in the bosom and the stupor of thought as taught by the Doctrine and Covenants. (revelations to Joseph Smith and subsequent prophets of the Mormon Church.)

Doctrine and Covenants 9: 8-9.

I went to the Aids Foundation of San Diego to apply for a Home Health Care Worker position similar to one which I had worked in seven years ago. I met Stan, a former Mormon, a gay male, who had married a daughter of an Apostle in the Mormon Church. He had since divorced. He took my resume. After we shared our mutual grief we just seem to walk away from each other. I never saw him again. I thought more and more as we surface nearer and nearer to the General Authorities perhaps they will do all they can to petition the Lord to help us find a place. "

July 15, 1994 - Friday- " I felt a spiritual warmth or glow as I prayed concerning a position as a school age teacher in the after school latchkey program. I remembered that I was a latchkey child myself. A child that sometimes comes home to open his house himself because his parents are working. I will take the position since I can use my talents in arts and crafts. "

I went to another of the meetings in Los Angeles where gay and lesbian men and women met with a Stake President in the Relief Society room. David was lecturing on Leviticus 18:22. The Stake President became upset saying the lecture went too far.

The Stake President explained that he wanted this group to be a spiritual meeting in which spiritual principles were covered. He wanted less intellectualizing and more the feeling of family home evening or Sunday School. We always had prayer. We sang hymns. We felt the love of the Savior in our meetings. As gay men and lesbian women we may appear to have an agenda but in reality we have nothing. We have no protection in our workplace. We have no place in the organized churches of our day including Mormon. So we have a lot of work to do.

If there were a place for us we would be there serving purposefully. If the Church claims there has been a place all along there are hundreds of thousands of us out here carefully examining the camouflage.

July 16, 1994 - Saturday- " Gay Pride parade in Hillcrest. I experienced many emotions such as pride, amazement, and being brought to tears as I watched gay policemen and policewomen marching arm and arm unafraid to declare the truth about their lives.

I saw two Mormon families marching in gay support groups which have to do with ending gay bashing and administering to Aids patients. I knew they were being brave once again in declaring what was right for they previously worked with gays and lesbians in Affirmation (Gay and Lesbian Mormons).

I felt a sense of self-worth at being a gay person which I needed to feel twenty years ago. "

September 24, 1994 - Saturday- "As a member of the Affirmation Group I checked with our President Jennifer. I told her I wanted to ask at the Church Family History Building administrators if we could start a Sunday School for gay and lesbian members of the Church. It was just a few blocks from where I lived.

I don't know where the courage came as I was walked by the Family History Building on 10th Street near Robinson Avenue in predominantly gay Hillcrest, San Diego. I approached the office and saw Sister Conold sitting in the first desk. I told her I represented a group of people who live in this area of Hillcrest who were members of the Church who could not attend Church. We wanted to know if we could meet in this building.

She summoned her husband Brother Conold. He wanted to talk right there near the customers of the L.D.S. bookstore. I told him the subject of the discussion was personal.

Once in the front office I realized I had the most difficult task of approaching someone fairly ignorant of homosexual needs as most members of the Church seem to be. I felt like capitulating but I decided I would raise his consciousness level.

I told Brother Conold that I was a member of Affirmation. I mentioned that it was gay and lesbian Mormons. We have a President of the San Diego chapter, Jennifer. We would like to meet with an authorized person who could give us permission to start a Sunday School for Lesbian

women and gay men who were Mormon, Latter-Day Saints. I was to learn later that at this point all Brother Conold heard was the lesbian part of my statement.

I continued to point out that we all have testimonies of the Gospel and that I had a testimony of the Gospel. I had served a mission, married in the Salt Lake Temple, worked as an employee in the Temple, sang in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir for five years, and had fathered two children.

Brother Conold replied he did not think that such a group of Lesbians could meet in this building. All Brother Conold heard was the word Lesbian, and that was it! He further stated that he did not think it was a good idea. They had trouble with other groups who met there and they had disturbed the neighbors with such things as parking problems and noise. I mentioned that most of us live just a few blocks from the building. I told him I live only three blocks away and did not have a car.

Then Brother Conold said that he could not make that kind of a decision. He did not look like he was enjoying my company in the slightest. He mentioned that there were many Stake Presidents over the building. I asked him who could I approach? He told me we had to have a Priesthood leader approach the regional representative Brother Jensen and get permission. He did not have his phone number.

I think he thought I would leave immediately never to darken his door again. His wife tried to help in the search for a phone number. I could feel her empathy but no one seemed to be able to get a phone number of the person I needed to ask. I was inwardly ready to quit and just call it a bad experience when I told them insistently I needed the name and phone number before I left.

I repeated that we all had testimonies of the Gospel. I had told him I been married, again. He chided me saying everyone had problems within a marriage and that I could have worked them out as all people do.

I told him when you marry a homosexual to a heterosexual you have a different problem; like mixing oil and water. I told them that none of us believed we chose that way. We had done all we could to conform to the plan but it did not work.

I stated that we were knocking at his door. We hope it will open for us finally. I could feel his reluctance. He finally gave the number of the former regional representative.

As I left the building I wept. I had wept earlier listening to Mormons hymns in the bookstore but now I wept for the endless slammed doors I had received, this being the closest. I knew I was in for more bloody knuckles and I wasn't sure I was up to it. I personally at that point felt even if the gospel was true I would be better off in another Church.

"It will be well with you at the last day " words from my patriarchal blessing groaned to me and so I girded up my loins and prepared to continue.

I reported the encounter to the Affirmation group giving the information and phone number to Jennifer our President. Late that year I was told that the Church condemned the building, moving all contact to this little San Francisco type community of Hillcrest of mine, withdrawing the spirit that seemed ever so close. I still fantasize about going to this gay ward in my neighborhood. Who knows it might be one of the best in the Church.

October 1, 1994 - Saturday - " I am wondering again who's plan was it that President Kimball was placing upon our heads? I always thought the truth was within the teachings of the Church but sometimes it appears to me that the truth is in us and we bring it to the Church so the Church can verify its truthfulness with the Lord. "

Every Time I Feel the Spirit

October 21, 1994 - Friday - "We drove through Mount Morris, New York to outside Rochester then on to Manchester New York.....saw the Hill Cumorah. Lily (a friend whom I had taught the Restored Gospel message) was impressed with the autumn colors. I thought now that she could see these historic Mormon sites she wouldn't wonder about the burning in the bosom or stupor of thought. I taught her everything she could understand about the Church but she did not have a testimony only knowledge of the truth.

We went to the Joseph Smith Home. Sister Woodruff, one of the missionaries gave us the tour. The tour went well. Sister Woodruff gave Lily a Book of Mormon with a sweet message inside the cover. Then we left the house. Lily told me that she was getting overwhelmed by a spiritual presence as we walked to the Sacred Grove. I was already tearful by the love shown to us by Sister Woodruff. Then as I started down the path to the Sacred Grove I felt overwhelmed.

The spirit of the Lord became stronger and stronger. We were captured in a power not of this world. It was similar to other spiritual experiences which I had in the Temple. I knew it was the Holy Ghost. It was glorious. It was like walking through a veil into heaven. It seemed like it was surrounding us for hundreds of feet. I felt as if we were being cleansed.

Though there were other people on the trail they seemed to dissolve from around us so we entered the Grove first and by ourselves. Lily read the sign describing what had occurred in the Grove so many years ago. (1820)

It was like coming out of a hurricane into the calm eye of the storm. The Spirit of the Lord was so intense. We walked to the place where the old Patriarch trees once stood when I first entered the Grove on February 20, 1964 with my missionaries.

Lily sat on one of the benches there. I gathered a few autumn leaves down in a gully from her just to collect my senses. I prayed to my Father in Heaven thanking him for letting me have a manifestation of his Holy Spirit with Lily. I knew she would never be the same now knowing the truthfulness of Joseph Smith's vision.

I felt the power of the spirit as we started to leave the threshold of the Sacred Grove by the sign. Lily reported being filled from her feet up as we walked back down the pathway. We both ended up describing our experience the rest of the day.

It was more than I could have expected. I knew the Church was true and I was having further verification that I could receive the witness of the (Holy) Spirit of the Lord. It was a wonderful spiritual day. Now Lily had a testimony of the Spirit of the Lord as well as the first vision. "

October 24, 1994 - Monday - " Returning to Joseph Smith's Home we walked onto the pathway of the Sacred Grove again. Once more the spiritual presence was overwhelming. It was so still. Very silent, very sacred....another ebb of spirit just flowed over us as if surf coming into shore.

The spirit seemed to subside once within the Grove. We found a new spot with older Beech trees. One of the trees was a sugar maple dated 180 years old in 1962. It was there when the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith.

It was very peaceful. I felt spiritual in the woods many times but not like this! This is the most beautiful manifestation or feeling I have ever felt in the Sacred Grove. "

Throughout the years that have followed whenever I became discouraged concerning being Gay and Mormon I remembered those many sacred moments as a testimony that I was worthy to receive these special witnesses of the truth no matter what.

December 24, 1994 - Saturday - "Sometimes it seems like such a game we as gays have to play. The heterosexual world will not acknowledge that we are homosexual or they think that we can be cured. They want us in a nice little package under the Christmas tree just identical to them.

We aren't allowed to be free in Churches, schools, or some employments for fear we may make the heterosexual world uncomfortable. Is God uncomfortable with us? He is the Creator. Somehow we have been formed through his divine fingers. We are here. If God objects to us. He will remove us. Why do people think that they have to do it for God?

Marrying heterosexuals and homosexuals brings most often divorce as I have witnessed with my life and the life of many others. Are then the Church leaders and officers, authors of Divorce? I question whether these marriage claimed cures were more often bi-sexual people able to steer their lives into giving up half of their feelings. "

March 2, 1995 - Thursday - " ...I'm not asking that the Church accept us but the Church must acknowledge us! There are not more of us than before but we are learning to speak the truth of our lives. Why not find a place for us. The arms of the Savior can wrap around us now why not His Church. "

When I attended the Affirmation Group in San Diego I became acquainted with several heterosexual Mormon couples attending who were interested in Gay and Lesbian Mormons issues. They mentioned their desire that the Church take a more positive approach to the Latter-Day Saint Gay and Lesbian.

One of the couples drove several of us from the Affirmation group to the meetings I've mentioned being held in Los Angeles. We would share sandwiches and most interestingly of all discuss what occurred at the Los Angeles meetings during the drive.

When I heard their point of views I realized I had made my life more difficult believing I was unworthy to participate in the Gospel plan. As I look back to their understanding and encouragement I realize they cared for my soul like the Savior must with complete unconditional love. When I felt that surround me I could be a better person even though I remain a gay male. With their faith and support I felt myself living the commandments more and more. "

March 17, 1995 - Friday - " Meeting in Los Angeles....Stake President opened the meeting as he usually does with a review on how the group started. The President told his regional representative that he had two to three hundred Gay men and Lesbian women Latter-Day Saints in his stake. He felt responsible for the souls of these people. He did not want to ignore them or have their salvation upon his head at the last day.

The Stake President reminded those in attendance they were not here to speak against the Church or its leaders. He had gone to his leaders not seeking advice but to notify them of what he was doing as it was " more easy to gain forgiveness than permission. "

He admonished that the purpose of the group was to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ. He said there was unconditional love for them from the Savior and that no one in this room is capable of being a son of perdition. (person who having been witnessed of the Holy Ghost, having a sure knowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, needing no faith of that then denies his testimony of what the Holy Ghost has witnessed.)

It was a evening in which those in attendance could ask the Stake President questions. One young man asked what does the Church want us to do? Some of us have found partners and we are told to be celibate. Another lesbian woman in a relationship of eight years said if they came back to the Church they would be excommunicated.

The President told us to return to the fold. We can show the members we have a testimony. He told them don't shirk the fight. Let the members see we are spiritual people. He dramatically emphasized," There will be an answer. There will be restitution. There will be a time of reconciliation. "

There were numerous other questions of import but the meeting seemed to lose its positive momentum when the stake President said that we seem to be talking about sex primarily.

All of us became very quiet and puzzled at his remarks. It was so similar to the kind of oratory we had received from some of our leaders. I thought we were talking about being people first rather than being sexual.

A veteran publisher of the magazine, A New Direction tried to bring in a clarification of this statement by declaring that most homosexuals don't think about sex any more than most heterosexuals. Another mature Gay man told the Stake President to substitute the word love each time he heard us speak of the need for intimacy. The Stake President acknowledged the statement and took it into consideration.

The most difficult statement I had with the evening concerned the proposed number of two to three hundred Gay men and Lesbian women in the West Hollywood Stake. West Hollywood was like Hillcrest in San Diego a center for Gay men and Lesbian women. Most everyone who was Gay or Lesbian knew the number was grossly under estimated.

There will be an answer! There will be restitution! There will be a time of reconciliation! I would hear these words echoing in my mind again and again.

I was wishing that there was a Stake President in San Diego who would have the foresight to form a group for Gay and Lesbian Mormons there since our group had to drive 200 miles to attend these meetings."

These meetings touched my spirit enabling me to keep my course and love for the Gospel. Most of all I was impressed that this leader of the Church was the first to show us love. The love the sinner part of the equation. Without that love no one can come unto the Lord. This man had cared about our eternal souls like no other leader of the Church had done.

While I had gone to New York State to visit historic sites in the Church also renewing my spirit, I had another mission. I would often visit my father who was my only living parent. If it was love that would heal us in the Church it would be love that would heal a family.

Another opportunity came to me to fly to New York State so I stopped again in my father's home. In this visit I found a type of closure to something that had occurred to me when I was a small child. In this I learned one of the meanings of what the scripture "turning the hearts of the children to their fathers" meant.

When I was five years old I was in the custom of visiting my father's apartment with his new wife. I saw my dad just once a year every year of my life until I was around 15 years old. It was just one day a year, on Christmas Day. It was a precious few hours my sister and I enjoyed.

This particular Christmas Day my sister and I had received some nice presents. I really liked my new presents but more important I loved being with my father. The other years when I had opened my presents I would go to my father and give him a kiss to thank him. This year was no exception.

As I drew near to him to place my little boys kiss upon his cheek, he pulled back leaving me astonished. He told me that I was too old to kiss him and he offered his handshake instead. I shook his hand but the child within me wondered if I had done something wrong. How could my Daddy whom I saw only once a year and loved so much withdraw from my little kiss?

July 9, 1995 - Sunday - " went to Dad's house... showed him photos of Grandpa Ehresmann's ancestral home of our forefathers in OberKutzenhausen, Alsace France. I gave him a copy of the Attridge family crest and a history of the Attridge name. I taped my father's conversation. I asked him about his childhood and mine. As I was leaving I hugged my half-brother and half-sister, then my father's wife, then my Dad.

Dad followed me out the front door and seem to be wanting to say or do something as I began to walk away. I thought that this could be the last time I would see my father since he was in his eighties. I felt courageous and stopped walking away. I turned and came back to stand before him. I gave him one more hug and then I kissed him on the cheek. It was the most innocent kiss of a little boy of five years of age. I wept as I continued down the driveway to my car. "

There will be restitution. There will be reconciliation.

July 10, 1995 - Monday - " I stood before my mother's grave this morning. I was hardly able to look at the grave. Hardly able to forgive all the verbal sexual abuse. To forgive her rejection of me toward the end of her life was almost impossible. She rejected me because she was told by my aunt that I (being gay) would not go to heaven. She had not forgiven me for divorcing from my wife.

I could hardly bring myself to forgive her even though I believed she did her best. I would hear the words of Louise Hay again quietly whisper in my ear. You cannot really love unless you forgive. At least for another year I could not really love I thought as I left the cemetery. "

There will be restitution. There will be a time of reconciliation. There will be a time of total forgiveness.

July 11, 1995 - Tuesday - " Passed the Hill Cumorah. The pageant sets are in one area now. There are eight light stands with four on either side of the stage area. That was all a part of the New Hill Cumorah Pageant. I had never seen this pageant only the old dramatic one done by Hansen.

On to the Joseph Smith Home. Parking was good at 10:45 a.m. Walked toward the grove. Again Lily was getting a witness. I was feeling very little until I entered the grove. We were told that one of the twelve Apostles was in the grove by departing visitors.

We walked in on a group of young people and some adults having their photo taken with Apostle M. Russell Ballard. I did not know this Apostle since I had been out of the Church nearly fifteen years. I pointed out to Lily the only man in the grove whom I thought was Apostle Ballard.

I spoke to the small group of people which stood close to us telling them that I was converted here in the Joseph Smith Home and the Sacred Grove. The spirit overwhelmed me so much so that I wept because members of the Church were listening to my testimony and about my conversion.

A man in a white shirt walked right up to Lily as I was pointing to the other man I thought was the Apostle. He stood in front of us reaching his hand to shake her hand. " How do you do I am Elder Ballard. " Lily was very happy to have met an Apostle. We continued to walk around the grove with this group of young people perhaps from his ward who came by bus from Utah.....

Later we drove to the Peter Whitmer Farm where the Church was first organized in 1830. On tour of the Chapel I saw Trevor Southey's beautiful sculpture of the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood. We moved outside to enter the log cabin replica in which the Church was organized but Apostle Ballard's bus drove up and all his group entered the cabin.

While we had time the missionary who was taking us through the tour asked if anyone wanted to bear their testimony or relay their conversion. After a long silence I decided to speak and I started to tell about my conversion. I told them that I was reconverting myself every day. They put me at ease by saying their lives also were filled with trials, tests and experiencing this same reconversion.

As I bore my testimony many of them were in tears. I could not withhold my emotions either and began to cry as well. I felt a connection that day with members who though they did not know my status nor did I know theirs, we loved the spirit of testimony and the truth.

We went back to the Hill Cumorah to see the pageant. People in the cast started welcoming us to the pageant. We shared our testimonies with them for now Lily was expressing her witness from the Sacred Grove. I was reminded of those missionaries who had brought me the Gospel. I felt a certain peace. "

July 21, 1995 - Friday - " Drove to Los Angeles with Mike, Donna, Al and Brandon, the acting President of Affirmation for San Diego. The Stake President opened the meeting with the reminder, no Church bashing. The discussion was on Eternal Marriage, eternal increase and the Temple marriage covenant likened to the highest degrees in exaltation. (afterlife)

Bruce R. McConkie's definition of salvation being a gift and exaltation something that must be worked for and earned was referred to. A young blond man was still bringing up to the Stake President that the Church seems to offer us only a life of celibacy. If this whole thing was just about sex then celibacy might seem the only option. However there is caring, tenderness,

thoughtfulness, unselfishness, love, consideration, respect and all are a part of homosexuality whether the heterosexual world at large can realize these things or not.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is concerned about love. For God and for neighbor as well as for self. Some people are learning how to love through forming relationships with their own sex. Take that away from them and they will never know love. Forbidding to love is not one of the commandments.

I thought that by asking Gays and Lesbians to be celibate maybe the Church would be in conflict with the warnings of the scriptures testifying of false teachings of "commanding to abstain from meats and forbidding to marry."

Then one return missionary amongst many of us stood up and related something which had happened to him while on his mission in Italy. He told of his missionary companion who did not love or like him. He vowed he would do a special thing for him every day.

For a week he secretly polished his shoes, cleaning up after this companion secretly but yet there was no feeling of natural affection or love from him. He did not stop loving. In his analogy he was saying, for me, that while we have not found favor with our leaders and members that we can still love them and do good.

You cannot really love until you have forgiven. We all were weeping. When we sang the closing hymn many of the members of the Church who had come to the meeting were weeping as well. Surely where the spirit of the Lord is, there is truth. "

Wait A Minute

President Spencer W. Kimball was a wonderful man. He was a prophet of God. I did all I could to follow his counsel. He was long suffering, empathetic, and did his best. He knew a great deal about homosexuality and knew numerous cases of homosexual men and women of the 1960's. I do not even now believe he could have done anything else than what he did in the 1960's. I do not discredit President Kimball's efforts but maybe there is a step two to the plan which can heal and save?

He believed we should marry and keep our gay life behind us by not telling our spouses. This is not a day of hiding in the shadows. We must deal with the truth head on with no side stepping. That means that the membership of the Church cannot walk around with blinders on. Be not of this world but don't deny it exists nor bear false witness pretending innocence or piety.

These are some statements made by President Kimball in his book Miracle of Forgiveness which I am compelled to respond to:

" The ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are symbols of wretched wickedness more especially related to this perversion, as the incident of Lot's visitors indicates. " (see Gen. 19:5). page 78.

Through years of personal survey (thousands of Gay men) I did not meet a single homosexual who would have taken anyone's daughters for sexual purposes. Heterosexual people might have, even bisexuals could, but not homosexuals. Of course I was not there. I am not a biblical scholar but Lot offers his daughters to be used for sexual purposes to a crowd of alleged homosexuals. What member in the Church would think such a thing from a righteous servant of the Lord? Your own daughters?

If Lot lived in a city of homosexuals he certainly would be aware that offering women to homosexuals would be ludicrous. Surely we are missing some facts on this incident.

It may be embarrassing for men who are blessed to be special witnesses of the Savior to prayerfully call upon the Lord in the sacred rooms of the Temple on the behalf of Gay and Lesbian people. I am not questioning the Lord. I simply want to know that these scriptures used against us really do speak about us.

" Sin in sex practices tends to have a snowballing effect. Thus it is that through the ages, perhaps as an extension of homosexual practices, men and women have sunk even to seeking sexual satisfactions with animals." page 78. Miracle of Forgiveness.

Through years of personal survey and experiences with homosexuals I have never met a homosexual who had sex or wanted to have sex with an animal. In fact the only person who ever mentioned such a practice, I met when I was 16 years old on a farm in New York State and he was heterosexual.

" If the abominable practice (homosexuality) became universal it would depopulate the earth in a single generation." page 81.

There are homosexuals all over the world who for various calamities have been raising their own and other people's children. Some are adopting children and the research seems to indicate that the children do not suffer nor become homosexual as a result. Perhaps two loving same sex partners could have raised me in a loving home. Perhaps I would have developed more love to overcome some of my other weaknesses.

" Our method is one we THINK would be approved by the Savior." page 83.

In the Church we bear testimony to the Gospel principles with the words " I know ". This statement gives evidence that the Holy Ghost has witnessed to us of the truth of the matter. If my experiences have stirred any feelings toward further revelation for those of us who find ourselves outside the fold my mission is accomplished. Then with the words " Thus saith the

Lord," will make President Kimball's statement " one we think would be approved by the Savior " History either way the revelation pronounces.

" Thus our approach is a positive one, dwelling upon the glories of the gospel and its blessings, the happiness of proper family life, the joy in individual cleanliness. Its success is reflected in the numerous lives blessed with complete recovery. " page 84.

I do not doubt the fully recovered out of mean spiritedness but as one who has done everything possible for me for so many years I question the quick fixed. I would ask them some very blunt questions for I have struggled to recover for a lifetime. I have sought the fully recovered only to find them participating in vicarious homosexuality.

I could write another book concerning the downfalls of my sexual practices of homosexuality. The calamities would seem equally serious to those following the Church program. When I see the love between two gay men and two lesbian women I know that there is something worthwhile there. It is something I missed like many of us on the earth. I have seen it work with others so I am convinced I am capable once I am healed of my past.

" There are private and public stories of people who have found freedom from homosexual desires. " This quote from Erin Eldridge's book " Born That Way " p 3. provokes the need to ask these so called recovering homosexuals some very in depth questions since I considered myself cured at one time.

If you have found the secret come and teach me that I may know you are a real person and the story you tell is not just a story. If what you say is true I rejoice. If not then I sorrow for the misrepresentation to millions of us out here in the real world who have struggled and suffered. There is nothing I like better than the whole truth, nothing but the truth. Perhaps we can speak face to face at a future date.

I am spilling my guts before everyone face front, in person. When I see that kind of forthrightness in the cured then I can evaluate the truthfulness of your written words.

" It was fast Sunday (once a month fast for 24 hours) and the end of class was reserved for bearing testimonies. I imagined standing up and telling them my name was Erin and I was new in the ward. I'd just started coming back to church because I was struggling with alcoholism and homosexuality. Then I imagined the whole room becoming still with that awkward uncomfortable kind of silence that is so deafening....Born That Way p.11.

It is sad that there is not a safe place within the Church for people to testify of their struggles and do so without fear. This is the same lack of consciousness which brought me crawling through life unable to heal myself in the Church. When the leaders and members of the Church can deal with the human condition then lives will be saved and souls will be exalted.

" But attractions toward the opposite sex can develop. Divine intervention may be needed to help uncover those desires."p 44.

These are words of Erin Eldridge again from her book titled Born That Way. What more could I have done? I did everything humanly and God seemingly possible. I forced. I practiced. I prayed. I served. I begged. Whatever you did was a secret to us. We cannot live a secret of your life. I believe the Lord has the secret and he will reveal it unto his servants his prophets if they will but think it out in their minds and bring it before him. No matter how distasteful that may seem. Out here we languish from the lack of that valiant act.

I do not want to hear from those in other Churches who think I was with the wrong group of people (Mormons) to really repent. While out of the Mormon Church I was involved in a host of Christian movements none of which convinced me by their behavior especially that they had any more ability to be helpful to me than the Mormon Church.

I will however listen to anything you have to say after you take the complete missionary discussions to the Mormon Church not previous to you reading this book!

I would join with the words of Sister Eldridge

" When I attempted to free myself from homosexual desires and behavior, I questioned many things. But there were two things I could never deny: The Book of Mormon is the word of God and Jesus is the Christ. " p.58.

The Book of Mormon is the most purely translated book of scripture with only one translation from the original. Yet none of the prophets felt it of eternal importance to say point blank Thou shalt not have same sex relationships or marriage. Neither can I find Jesus Christ saying these same things while he ministered here on the earth. This issue is too important for these two vehicles not to have recorded the command.

" When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman,(taken in adultery) he said unto to her, Woman where are thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

She said , No man Lord. And Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more. " John 8:10-11.

The woman could have left the Savior's presence and chosen a single marriage partner. The homosexual would most likely experience what I have experienced. Where are the options? I would rather love another human being than wax in a forced state of misery.

" We advocate the example of the Lord, who condemned the sin, yet loved the sinner. " Gordon B. Hinckley conference talk quoted in Dallin H. Oaks Ensign article Same Gender Attraction. p.13.

The Savior appears to have said, " Neither do I condemn thee, ". Somehow in all these years of sincere application of the Church program which I understood, all I heard was condemning. Where was the love? Where were the outstretched arms?

Prophets and Apostles may condemn and love. We as latter day gay and lesbian persons with testimonies of their divine calling wait upon the love of Christ to provide us place.

I do fear God. I do have respect for the Church leader's divine calling. I know I appear bold for having dared to discuss these things but If I do not, who will? I purported in my excommunication letter that I turned out to be an experiment pro or con for marrying Gay and Lesbian members of the Church to heterosexual partners.

" This is not to say that marriage is a cure for same sex attraction. President Gordon B. Hinckley has said : ' Marriage should not be viewed as a therapeutic step to solve problems such as homosexual inclinations or practices, which first should clearly be overcome with a firm and fixed determination.' Reverence and Morality, Ensign May 1987, p. 47. Born That Way p.45.

What am I to think upon these statements from what has transpired in my life? Did I somehow fall between the cracks without a firm and fixed determination? Trust is a sacred thing. I gave the Lord through his Church all the determination I had. I must be guided by the truth as I see the truth. Lord enlighten my mind when I do not understand thy purposes.

" Some men find it helpful to get involved with sports or start working out to gain a greater sense of masculinity. Changing certain mannerisms or mode of dress can also help men as well as women. " Born That Way p.107.

Look at the world the Creator has place around us. He created birds, flowers, trees to shade us. This was a nurturing Father in Heaven with the sensitivity to create this magnificent globe of flora and fauna. It was through divine power but with an infinite and sensitive tenderness.

I don't know what prompted the Apostle Paul to rave about the effeminate. What beautiful thing in all of creation was wrought without the feminine. Can we cut it from us like an eye that offends thee. Must we all look alike in clothing, manner, and countenance? Were we not all conceived by a man and a woman.

This erroneous belief that Gays and Lesbians are just lacking development of the opposite gender inclinations in their nature, seems a theory of desperation. The masculine and the feminine is in everyone since we have earthly as well as heavenly parents both male and female.

We have been falsely accused of sexual promiscuity, child molesting, bringing aids and diseases upon the world, divulging military secrets, and depopulating the earth. I don't know

how others can judge us without the realization they are breaking the commandment of God, "Thou shalt not bear false witness. "

I would think it was obvious where the homosexual is forced to turn as he is run out of the Church. If he doesn't choose atheism then he must heal somewhere. And isn't that somewhere a place of real love. The shame is it is not in the Church. As you have done it unto me you have done it unto the Savior. For I am the least of these your brethren.

In The Event, a Salt Lake City newspaper, the April 1996 edition, Edwin B. Firmage reveals the continuing persecution of Lesbians and Gays in predominately Mormon Utah. The Salt Lake

City School Board banned all extracurricular clubs in the schools to prevent the formation of Gay and Lesbian support groups in the high schools. He was particularly distressed at the mean spirited words of some state senators one declaring "that since gays can't reproduce among themselves they recruit our children to sodomize them. " Let My Children Go - Seeing the Stranger as Enemy p. 8. The Event.

Firmage reveals that these words came from elected state representatives " they were motivated , I believe , by deep homophobic fear. One source was the leadership of our state's dominant religion, the LDS Church resonating to its perception of current litigation and debate in Hawaii relating to same sex marriage. " p. 8. The Event.

Later he advises, "Not one gay person with whom I have ever spoken considers that he or she chose to be gay or lesbian. They knew they had same sex attraction early in life. None whom I have met ever felt that they could change this. Not by prayer, not by fasting; not by reading scriptures; not by submitting to torture under the guise of " behavior modification therapy " like experimental rats in some in human experiment, though many have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars trying; and not by marriage to a heterosexual, as if one could be seduced into a change of one's fundamental biologically determined sexual orientation. Such marriages usually end sadly; with damage done to many. " p. 8-9. The Event.

The Lord brought the missionaries to my door to teach me his Gospel. I was baptized for better or worse a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and given the gift of the Holy Ghost. Through this divine power he testified to me of the truthfulness of his "Restored Gospel".

The Lord Jesus Christ, through his appointed Prophet David O, McKay called me to serve him on a mission. He allowed me to teach bringing several dozen persons into his fold. I was accepted as a student of Brigham Young University to further my education. The Savior allowed me to associate with Prophets and Apostles of his Church. He enabled me to sing in His choir.

The Savior granted me permission to be employed in his Temple. He allowed me to gain more of a testimony of his divine presence there. The Lord allowed me to walk in his holy places. He granted me entrance to his most sacred dwelling places preserving my life. The Savior enabled

me to father two wonderful children, love and care the best I could for them and to have a noble wife. Jesus Christ enabled me to teach his gospel, bless the sick, bless my children, and reactivate many members into his Church.

My Savior has testified to me in the Sacred Grove of the first Vision of his Prophet Joseph Smith. He has enabled me to teach others preparing them for the missionaries and for baptism into his Church. The Lord has provided a group (Los Angeles) for me to express my individual nature to others like me. Where

we may grow, serve, and love. This group is the only contact I have with His Church. It is a sacred trust enabling me to know of the truth. I am truly thankful.

It would be difficult for me to believe that this is all the Lord has in store for me or for people like me. As with the cries of the woman of Canaan, " yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. "

I ask, " Where are the crumbs? "

Matthew 15:22-28

Where Are The Crumbs?

December 25, 1995 - Monday- Christmas Day- " I looked at the picture which my sister sent to me which was taken of me at age one. Who could say that my life would follow such a difficult path from looking at that small baby in the photo. My book isn't written with intent to thwart the Kingdom of God. As the scriptures testify nothing will stop the kingdom from rolling forth throughout the entire earth.

My book isn't just for Mormons, though I lived my life as one who strived to be called worthy. It is not just for Christians for I have lived my life with those ideals as a compass. It is for anyone in or out of any religion who recognizes that gay and lesbian people are good people, loving people, thoughtful people, and unselfish people.

The world did not know who Jesus Christ really was nor did they take the time to look into his heart for the truth. Could it be that we have some purpose that man knows nothing about? You really didn't know who we were. When the Savior returns to the earth may we clean up the debris together. "

April 4, 1996 - Thursday- "..... called Donna and Mike who use to drive us gay Mormons to Los Angeles to the meetings with the stake President. They were told by their leaders to not associate with anyone that does not exemplify gospel principles. The Los Angeles group no longer invites those of us by postcard to each monthly meeting outside of the specific Los Angeles stake.

The group has changed its format with meetings being seen over by the members of the stake high council (consisting of the Stake President, his two counselors and 12 high councilmen.) That is why I have not been receiving the monthly post card invitation. Like a thin silk thread which I held onto as my only real priesthood contact with the church it has snapped tonight for me.

I am broken off from the Church still a further time. I am in deepest grief, deepest despair. I am without the love of the gospel I so often have looked upon, once again. I have no part in the gospel I know. I am left to myself. So shall I remain until I return to the place of all truth in the afterlife to understand what has happened. Where are the crumbs? "

April 7, 1996 - Sunday " I watched all the session of General Conference. It was difficult to watch the Tabernacle Choir mouthing the music with them as if I belonged. I sang. I cried. I refused to relive all I had experienced again. I drowned in self-pity. Where are the crumbs? "

May 17, 1996 - Friday- " ...met with Al, David, Ralph to attempt to drive to Los Angeles Discussion Group but met with car failure just miles from our destination. It seemed all such a waste until I learned of all their work done in another Church.

These were all former Mormons. Their great leadership, strengths, and talents were being channeled into the Metropolitan Community Church. I thought of all that talent ignored. The work that these former elders could do for the Church but they could not. Where are the crumbs?

" And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

Nay much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.

And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

For our comely parts have no need: God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked.

That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have care one for another.

And whether one member suffer, all suffer with it; or one member be honored, all members rejoice with it. " - 1 Corinthians 12: 21-26.

May 20, 1996 - " My sister sent me the October 1995 Ensign (official magazine of the Church). Quoting Apostle Dallin H. Oaks, " We should extend compassion to persons who suffer

from ill health, including those who are infected with HIV or who are ill with AIDS, who may or may not have acquired their condition from sexual relations. We should encourage such persons to participate in the activities of the Church."

Must I acquire AIDS in order for the leaders of the Church to encourage my participation in the activities of the Church. Can we not enjoy the free gift of salvation while looking for the pathway to working out the task of attaining our exaltation?

Where were those words of defense when I was living in Salt Lake City. When gay and lesbian persons were being murdered in Liberty Park, harassed at their employment or driven from their dwellings places? Is our Church so conservative and mainstream now that we wait for the calamity before seeking inspiration, revelation and gifts of the spirit to alleviate suffering?

Excluding homosexuals from Church meetings and membership implies we could talk heterosexuals into being gay or lesbian. From everything I have seen or experienced in my life that cannot be done. Do you really think the other churches will think you are apostate if you minister to the gay community? The tempest is raging for us as well as the heterosexual members of the Church. May the Savior bring Peace to us all through the truth.

During the beginning of the AIDS epidemic especially in Utah I did not see much of this compassion being exhibited by leaders and members of the Mormon Church. Again the condemnation note was being played louder than the love the sinner note. Where were the crumbs? "

June 21, 1996 - Friday - " Drove with Al Smith to what we in San Diego call, the third Friday meeting at the stake center in Westwood, Los Angeles. A member of the stake high Council announced that the stake president which guided the group for several years was released from his calling as stake president. There will be two high council members in charge of the group now. The elder who originated the group, was asked to step down. A new leader/teacher would be teaching us as gay and lesbian members of the group.

The high council member later told me that the former stake president was reprimanded and released by Apostle Hales. The reason was the group meeting on September 15, 1995 was publicized beyond the Westwood Stake. This group could only be under this stake president's direction for members specifically of the Westwood Stake. We from San Diego could still attend. However I would not receive a post card reminder of the meeting.

The September 15th meeting featured Michael Bussee, co- founder of Exodus International, the largest " ex-gay " organization in the world, and a former ex-gay minister in Orange County. While still affiliated with Exodus he met and fell in love with fellow counselor Gary Cooper. Their combined experiences led them to the conclusion that change ministries are ineffective and can be harmful to their participants. They decided to resign and live quietly as a couple.

The gay leader of the group gave a lesson focused around Doctrine and Covenants 58:26-29.

For Behold it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.

Verily I say men, should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward.

But he that doeth not anything until he is commanded, and receiveth a commandment with doubtful heart, and keepeth it with slothfulness, the same is damned.

We seemed to be steered away from our fears about the group being disbanded. The lesson seemed bland compared to the convictions of the previous leader/teacher David, who originated the group through the now released stake president.

Even the songs seemed to lack the luster and spirit we enjoyed with the former leader and stake president. I've begun to realize that this man, the former stake president had been the one who took the time to listen to so many of our stories of grief and pain at being excluded from the Church.

There was for several years shining moments of understanding and most of all the pure Christ love, the hand of the Savior

behind every good wish and strong counsel of this stake president and also the elder who cared enough to start the group.

We all knew now that Salt Lake (meaning the Apostles and Prophet of the Church) General Authorities were aware of our group. Reprimand or not he that hath ears now could hear.

The high councilman told me that the stake president could not direct the group but could attend. The elder who started the group also could not direct but could attend.

All this communication over the past few years seemed in vain as we would have to educate new Councilmen to our situation or perhaps that would be eliminated. Again, We were given the crumbs.

I was introduced to a former excommunicated gay male who had just been re-baptized. He acknowledged that he was HIV-positive. He divulged that he would remain celibate for the Lord for the rest of his life. I mentioned this to the stake high council member. He told me of a female psychologist who had bitten her fingernails to the nub over her self-directed celibacy.

I told the stake high councilmen that for these people who seemed close to the end of life that celibacy was almost tolerated but ask men and women as a return missionaries at age 20 to look forward for the rest of their lives maybe 50-60 years to fingernails to the nub would lead many to suicide. He replied many must pledge this celibacy as a sacrifice for the Lord.

I do not believe this is what the Savior meant by losing your life for my sake. To live a life without tenderness, caring, passion, and intimacy seemed even against the principles of the family. Look at other churches who demand celibacy producing criminal behavior in its priesthood. We condemn this on the left hand and considerate on the right. Deep within my soul I know that is wrong.

During the discussion tonight one female heterosexual member stated that she thought the Lord must love the gay and lesbian very much to try and test them so grievously. I could not object more. Not at any time in my life did I ever think that the God of Heaven was behind the sorted behavior exhibited to me throughout my stay in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

I asked the high councilmen if the former stake president could come to San Diego and speak to the stake presidents in our area to start a discussion group like the one in the Westwood Stake. He pronounced that would not be likely because of the reprimand he received.

I weep now as I see those fading images of what was a Christ like person, who like a father patiently guided the group through true progress for activating us into the Church. I believe that part of the mission is now in jeopardy. I would greatly miss this man who looked into my countenance when I grieved over being mistreated knowing this discussion group was the only contact with the priesthood of the Church I was having in 18 years.

In this case the letter of the law may have been violated but the spirit was bringing us home.

The Place

Throughout my life I have heard many people from prophets to beggars tell me what my place is as a homosexual. When all the dust settles from those Bible interpreters who seem to desire to wash their hands of gay people I find solace in seeking the Lord through various activities still available to me.

While we are excluded and thought to be unworthy we can still show our faith in God. My efforts center around what I can do. My excommunication letter informs me that I may not partake of the sacrament (bread and water emblems of Christ body). I am to make no contributions to the Church. My faith in the Savior is shown by the following things I endeavor to do.

" Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life. " John 5:39. I find place for myself every time I read scriptures. I especially am enlightened by biblical scholars who can

give the scripture a more eyewitness sense. Many scriptures which others use to condemn us as not being acceptable

subside when the full keyboard is played. We need to keep up our knowledge of the scriptures so that others in their judgment cannot distract us from our goal of returning to our Father in Heaven in love.

" Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, " says the sacred Mormon Hymn. When I pray I cannot hear the words of any other person only that of my Heavenly Father ever encouraging me to better myself. My prayers have brought me many spiritual experiences which strengthen my testimony of the Savior. Without prayer I would have given up long ago. Seeking the witness of the Holy Ghost assures that you may know the truth of your life no matter what any other voice may pronounce.

".... this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. " Matt. 17:21. I have prayed and fasted throughout my life to come to a understanding of my homosexuality. I have come to realize from that fasting that I am totally loved by the Savior. Fasting has humbled me many times to be teachable. I do not need the Church fast Sunday to enable me to fast though I would long to be in the presence of the members of the Church to hear their testimonies and bear mine. Fasting is a free gift. Use It!

I can be all that any other Latter-Day Christians can be. I can hold a Sunday School with other Gay and Lesbian members or former members. I can sing the hymns of Zion by myself or with others. I can do my genealogy. I can prepare ancestors making them temple ready through the genealogy system of the Church. I may not be able to contribute to the Church but I can help the poor, feed the hungry, comfort the hospitalized, and forgive. I have to forgive everything. Everything!

Perhaps the only place for us at this present time is in the act of forgiveness. I forgive the missionaries who taught me. If they knew who I was yet converted me into the gospel I forgive them. I am thankful to have known the truth for my earth experience. I forgive my parents for there were so few available guides to loving children in my childhood time. I forgive my mother for all she really wanted was a husband. I forgive my father for he did the best he could with his personality.

I forgive President Kimball for wanting my salvation and exaltation so much he would bless my hypocrisy. I forgive the leaders of the Church for relying on our forced hypocrisy. I must forgive them for forming a plan to marry us to heterosexuals bringing us to our destruction harming our families which we regret more than restitution ever brought upon us.

I forgive any members of the Church who through believing homosexuals were a hiss and a byword fueled the flames of our pain. I forgive all the University of Utah Medical Hospital Administrators and Personnel for cowering to the fears of prejudicial homophobic thinking allowing me to interrupt my chosen career.

I forgive Dr. Robert Card for trying so desperately to shock me into being a heterosexual person. I forgive the people of the State of Utah for pinning on me the pink triangle causing me to flee their presence for my life.

I forgive myself for being a victim. I forgive myself for judging myself.

And if we can find no place within the Church we must find our place somewhere else. Some place where none shall hurt or make afraid. We can serve the Savior by knowing his teachings and living them. And if we become members of other Christian faiths more tolerable to our reality, Heaven help the program that took us from our appointed missions.

God Who Is Our Home

July 15, 1996 - Monday - " Lily and I went to the Mormon Battalion Visitors Center in San Diego today to listen to the Conference talks of the General Authorities from April 1995. I had heard the conference talk of newly sustained President and Prophet of the Church, Gordon B. Hinckley.

I wanted Lily to listen to the talk as well as watch some videos concerning the First Vision, The Restoration of the Priesthood, and Windows of Heaven video concerning President Lorenzo Snow receiving the instructions from the Lord for the Church to tithe. She was having difficulty understanding the Law of Tithing. She had the missionary discussions to the Church but felt badly for how I was treated slowing down her proposed baptismal date.

I was especially prayerful when I heard President Hinckley speak of those people who had left the Church. Though I represented a controversial group in and out of the Church I imagined that he was speaking to me.

" All of us in this great cause are of one mind, one belief, of one faith. You have as great an opportunity for satisfaction in your performance of your duty as I do in mine. The progress of this work will be determined by our joint efforts. Whatever your calling, it is fraught with the same opportunity to accomplish good as mine. What is really important is that this is the work of the Master. Our work is to go about doing good as did He. If in my service, If I have offended anyone, I offer my apology.

To those of you who for any reason find yourselves outside the embrace of the Church you once enjoyed, I invite you to return and partake of the happiness you once knew. You will find many with outstretched arms to warmly welcome you and assist you. "

I hope that is what I have seen from the Mission Bay Ward discussion group or the one in Los Angeles. These groups were the only contact I had with the Church in these last sixteen years. When I am at these group meetings I feel like I am HOME.

But are they the outstretched arms?

Somewhere between a rock and a hard place is an answer. I believe that the only one that can find that answer is the prophet of the Lord. I realize that the path appointed by our modern day prophet is the mainstream of Christianity but out stretched arms are outstretched arms. Can those arms fall to their sides when the gay and lesbian persons crawl to them? Where are the good Samaritans? "

Dear President, Prophet and General Authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,

We want to come home. Do you have a safe place for us? A place of honesty, truthful self-expression where none shall come to hurt or make afraid.

It is difficult to see the outstretched arms warmly welcoming me as yet. I saw the warmth of brotherly kindness in one member of the Bishopric who formed a discussion group for Gay and Lesbian Latter-Day Christians in the Mission Bay Ward. The group no longer meets.

I see the kindness and understanding of a very brave Stake President who began the group that meets in Los Angeles. It is the only warm welcome I have seen since leaving the Church that cold Christmas Eve in December 1980.

But this Christ like person has been removed for going the extra mile. The L.A. group is 200 miles away.

I need a place where my Priesthood and baptism may be restored. I do believe that this Place still needs to be created. I know I will recognize it when I see it for it shall welcome me like I am home. It could be a branch for Gay and Lesbian members.

Of all the people upon the face of the whole earth you are the only ones who can make that safe place for me.

I have found it in my own room kneeling before the Lord in prayer so often. I want to see it in the Church I love so much. The Church I still testify of, with its divine mission. If there may be a place for me to serve I wish to be at the side of my brothers and sisters who like myself are gay, lesbians and bi-sexual who have testimonies of the Restored Gospel.

I testify to the truthfulness of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. I sustain all the leaders of the Church as appointed stewards of the Lord Jesus Christ here on the earth. I know that Joseph Smith saw God the Eternal Father and His Son Jesus Christ in the Sacred Grove near Palmyra, New York in 1820. I know that President Spencer W. Kimball was a prophet of God.

I have learned from the counsel of Prophets and Apostles. I sustain all the General Authorities of the Church. I plead with all leaders in the Church everywhere, Find A Place For Us. Provide that safe place for us where we can speak the truth and enjoy the spirit of the Lord.

Dear Heavenly Father, my creator,

I submit myself to thy Kingdom upon the earth. What I felt in the Sacred Grove I realize is but a little of thy righteous power. I felt overwhelmed by my finite ability to understand thy power and grandeur. Surely I learned that day how no unclean thing can enter thy presence. I feel that many things which occurred in my life can be discerned by thy leaders as being unclean. I am asking thee to teach me the way I may please thee and remain a warm loving person. I pray thee deliver me from a life devoid of intimacy. Thou hast given me my body which can express passion, do not ask me to spend my entire life without passion. Thou hast given me my daily bread, forgiven my trespasses. Give me the foresight to forgive those who I believed for one reason or another brought me to the valley of the shadow of death.

For a wise and glorious purpose thou hast placed me here on earth. Give me the length of life to accomplish thy work, and if it be thy will, help me find my appointed work. May I truly understand thy work in me, thy will be done. Forgive my many failures in character. Strengthen me through thy Holy Spirit to know the truth and live truthfully with others and before thee. Help me to be a better offspring of thy sacred Fatherhood. Forgive me now if anything I have said in this document has been offensive to thee. Bring me to a knowledge of the purposes of my existence. Bring me into a more positive day wherein I may be a more productive citizen, father, and companion to those I love. Please remove my bitterness that I may love thee more perfectly and love others and myself. Allow me to serve thee, I pray thy will be done in the name of thy beloved son, Jesus Christ, Amen.

I would like to close this work with words from the Doctrine and Covenants Section 121:41-46. It is the Priesthood that will eventually receive the answers to all that has been said upon this subject. So it is to the Priesthood I humbly pray that my work has been said with love and respect for your holy calling but I hope, has pierced your hearts to the center.

"No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and love unfeigned;

By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile-

Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy;

That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death.

Let thy bowels also be full of charity toward all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dew from heaven.

The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever."

God be with you till we meet again. By his counsel's guide, uphold you; With his sheep securely fold you. God be with you till we meet again! Till we meet at Jesus feet. God be with you till we meet again!

Epilogue

Through our pain they will see their injustice. - Mahatma Gandhi

Every Gay male, Lesbian female, or Bi-sexual person who believes they have suffered indignity, spiritual persecution, or social ostracism as a result of attitudes and behaviors of members or leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints are cordially invited to write the first Presidency of the Church. Please explain what program you wish the Church would use to promote your further spiritual progress in Christ's Church.

I would encourage straight forward courteousness and humility such as exhibited by the woman of Canaan.

"Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." - Matthew 15:28

Sacred Grove

Friday October 17, 1997

My Beloved Sons

Joseph, Joseph. Joseph brought me here.
My emotions fly to the tree heights,
As feet scuffle through dead/live leaves.
I am in thy Holy Sanctuary.

Where I fear God but I am not afraid.
Neither jeers of the world nor misguided members

Can touch me, for I am touched of the spirit.
I am home, where I am loved unconditionally.

I have many sons, all are beloved,
Father many children not of my blood.
In the peace of thy Sacred Grove I hear,
The Thank You, the Thank You.

No one can comprehend but ONE the pain,
Of the withdrawal of the Father's
Outstretched arms, Arms that members could,
Have extended as God can not reveal himself.

Someone has taught them reluctance.
Someone has failed them to be inclusive.
For that failure, these valiant acts,
We thy children no matter our state,
Have been wasted, utterly discarded,
Foolishly misunderstood, falsely accused.

Not on this earth will I ever understand,
Such treatment, even by the Lord's anointed.
Forgiveness crosses my lips like,
Silverware touching a filling.

Quiet peace, peace thy grove comforts.
The wind rustles, the leaves scurry,
My bloody knuckles are arthritic.
I must serve another God for lack of love.

I am re-excommunicated, re-evaluated.
Sick of the apathy, the self-righteousness,
That has unwelcomed me, A Gay Man,
To a church of people but not in the
Grove of the Sacred.

Update

December 9, 1997 - Through ongoing conversations with my Stake President in San Diego I learned that he read my book twice and he wept when I spoke to him. However, as yet no group has been formed like the one in Los Angeles.

My Stake President invited me to attend church, offered to walk with me though all my meetings. He read portions of the letter from Loren C. Dunn who said "it was a book about Attridge, about his immoral acts" which makes me believe he may have not read the book.

Since I haven't found a publisher, I am sending this book through the Internet. Perhaps someone will be moved, someone helped, someone given hope.

I am still a testimony without a church. I have returned to attending Teaching of the Inner Christ, and though I don't assume all its components, there is love there. And all the truth in the world is of little value without love. No amount of truth can compensate for the lack of love.